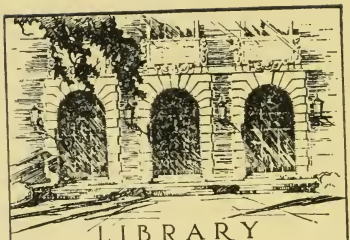

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TEN

THOUSAND

A-YEAR.

Fortuna sævo læta negotio, et
Ludum insolentum ludere pertinax,
Transmutat incertos honores,
Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.
Laudo manentem: si celeres quatit
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit, et mea
Virtute me involvo, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quæro.
HOR. CARM. Lib. iii. 49.

VOL. IV.

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TEN THOUSAND A-YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

The undulations of the popular excitement in town, were not long in reaching the calm retreat of Titmouse in Yorkshire. To say nothing of his having on several occasions observed artists busily engaged in sketching different views of the Hall and its surrounding scenery, and, on inquiry, discovered that they were sent from town for the express purpose of presenting to the public sketches of the "residence of Mr. Titmouse," a copy of the inimitable performance of Mr. Bladdery Pip—viz. "Tippitiwink," tenth edition—was sent down to Mr. Titmouse by Gammon; who also forwarded to him, from time to time, newspapers containing those paragraphs which identified Titmouse with the hero of the novel, and also testified the profound impression which it was making upon the thinking classes of the community. Was Titmouse's wish to witness the ferment he had so unconsciously produced in the metropolis unreasonable? Yatton was beginning to look duller daily, even before the arrival of this stimulating intelligence from town; Titmouse feeling quite out of his element. So—Gammon *non contradicente*—up came Titmouse to town. If he had not been naturally a fool, the notice he attracted in London must soon have made him one. He had been for coming up in a postchaise and four; but Gammon, in a letter, succeeded in dissuading him from incurring so useless an expense, assuring him that men of as high

consideration as himself, constantly availed themselves of the safe and rapid transit afforded by the royal mail. His valet, on being appealed to, corroborated Mr. Gammon's representations; adding, that the late hour in the evening at which the mail arrived in town, would effectually shroud him from public observation. Giving strict and repeated orders to his valet to deposit him at once "in a first-rate West-End hotel," the haughty lord of Yatton, plentifully provided with cigars, stepped into the mail, his valet perched upon the box-seat. That functionary was well acquainted with town, and resolved on his master's taking up his quarters at the Harcourt Hotel, in the immediate vicinity of Bond Street. The mail passed the Peacock, at Islington, about half-past eight o'clock; and long before they had reached even that point, the eager and anxious eye of Titmouse had been on the look-out for indications of his celebrity. He was, however, compelled to own that both people and places seemed much as usual, wearing no particular air of excitement. He was a little chagrined, till he reflected on the vulgar ignorance of the movements of the great for which the eastern regions of the metropolis were proverbial, and also on the increasing duskiness of the evening, the rapid pace at which the mail rattled along, and the circumstance of his being concealed inside. When his humble hackney coach (its driver a feeble old man, with a wisp of straw for a hat-band, and sitting on the rickety box like a heap of dirty old clothes, and the flagging and limping horses, looking truly miserable objects,) had rumbled slowly up to the lofty and gloomy door of the Harcourt Hotel, it seemed to excite no notice whatever. A tall waiter, in a plain suit of black evening dress, continued standing in the ample doorway, eyeing the plebeian vehicle which had drawn up with utter indifference—conjecturing, probably, that it had come to the wrong door. With the same air of provoking superciliousness he stood, till the valet, having jumped down from his seat beside the driver, ran up, and in a peremptory sort of way exclaimed, "Mr. Titmouse of Yatton!" This stirred the waiter into something like energy.

"Here, sir!" called out Mr. Titmouse, from within the coach; and on the waiter's slowly approaching, inquired

with sufficiently swaggering manner—"Pray, has the Earl of Dreddlington been inquiring for me here to-day?" The words seemed to operate like magic, converting the person addressed, in a moment, into a slave—supple and obsequious.

"His lordship has not been here to-day, sir," he replied in a low tone, with a most courteous inclination; and gently opening the door, and noiselessly letting down the steps. "Do you alight, sir?"

"Who—a—have you room for me, and my *fellow* there?"

"Oh yes, sir! certainly.—Shall I show you into the coffee-room sir?"

"The coffee-room? Curse the coffee-room, sir! Do you suppose I'm a commercial traveller? Show me into a private room, sir!" The waiter bowed low; and in silent surprise led Mr. Titmouse to a very spacious and elegantly furnished apartment—where, amidst the blaze of six wax candles, and attended by three waiters, he supped, an hour or two afterwards, in great state—retiring about eleven o'clock to his apartment, overcome with fatigue, and brandy and water: having fortunately escaped the indignity of being forced to sit in the same room where an English nobleman, one or two members of Parliament, and a couple of foreign princes, were sitting sipping their claret, some writing letters, and others conning over the evening papers. About noon, the next day, he called upon the earl of Dreddlington; and though, under ordinary circumstances, his lordship would have considered the visit rather unseasonable, he nevertheless received his fortunate and now truly distinguished kinsman with the most urbane cordiality. At the earl's suggestion, and with Mr. Gammon's concurrence, Titmouse, within about a week after his arrival in town, took chambers in the Albany, together with the elegant furniture which had belonged to their late tennant, a young officer of distinction, who had shortly before suddenly gone abroad upon a diplomatic mission. Mr. Titmouse soon began to feel, in various ways, the distinction which was attached to his name—commencing, as he did at once, the gay and brilliant life of a man of high fashion, and under the august auspices of the Earl of Dreddlington.

Like as a cat, shod with walnut-shells by some merry young scapegrace, doubtless feels more and more astonished and excited at the clatter it makes in scampering up and down the bare echoing floors and staircases; so, in some sort, was it with Titmouse, and the sudden and amazing *eclât* with which all his appearances and movements were attended in the regions of fashion. 'Tis a matter of indifference to a fool, whether you laugh with him or at him; so as that you do but laugh—an observation which will account for much of the conduct both of Lord Dreddlington and Titmouse. In this short life, and dull world, the thing is—to create a *sensation*, never mind how; and every opportunity of doing so should be gratefully seized hold of, and improved to the uttermost, by those who have nothing else to do, and have an inclination to distinguish themselves from the common herd of mankind. Lord Dreddlington had got so inflated by the attention he excited, that he set down every thing he witnessed to the score of deference and admiration. His self-conceit was so intense, that it consumed every vestige of sense he had about him. He stood in solitary grandeur upon the lofty pillar of his pride, inaccessible to ridicule, and insensible indeed of its approach, like *vanity* "on a monument smiling at" *scorn*. Indeed,

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

He did not conceive it possible for any one to laugh at *him*, or any thing he might choose to do, or any one he might think fit to associate with and introduce to the notice of society—which kind office he forthwith performed for Titmouse, with whose odd person, and somewhat eccentric dress and demeanour, his lordship (who imagined that the same operation was going on in the minds of other people) was growing daily more familiar. Thus, that which had at first so shocked him, he got at length thoroughly reconciled to, and began to suspect whether it was not assumed by Titmouse out of a daring scorn for the intrusive opinions of the world, which showed a loftiness of spirit akin to his own. Besides, in another point of view—suppose the manner and appearance of Titmouse were ever so absurd, so long as his lordship

chose to tolerate them, who should venture to gainsay them? So the earl asked him frequently to dinner, took him with them when his lordship and Lady Cecilia went out in the evenings; gave him a seat in his carriage in going down to the House; and invited him to accompany him and Lady Cecilia when they either drove or rode round the Park; as to which latter, Titmouse's assiduous attention at the riding-school enabled him to appear on horseback without being *glaringly* unequal to the management of his horse, which, however, he once or twice contrived to give an inclination towards backing upon those of Lady Cecilia and the earl. Titmouse happening to let fall, at the earl's table, that he had that day ordered an elegant chariot to be built for him, his lordship intimated that a cab was the usual turn-out of a bachelor man of fashion; whereupon Titmouse the next day countermanded his order, and was fortunate enough to secure a cab which had just been completed for a young nobleman who was unable to pay for it, and whom, consequently, the builder did not care about disappointing. He soon provided himself with a great horse and a little tiger. What pen can do justice to the feelings with which he first sate down in that cab, yielding upon its well-balanced springs, took the reins from his little tiger, and then heard him jump up behind! As it was a trifle too early for the Park, he suddenly bethought himself of exhibiting his splendours before the establishment of Mr. Tagrag; so he desired his little imp behind to run and summon his valet, who in a trice came down; and in answer to a question, "whether there wasn't something wanting from a draper or hosier," was informed glibly, that six dozen of best cambric pockethandkerchiefs, a dozen or two pair of white kid gloves, half-a-dozen stocks, and various other items were "wanting"—(*i. e.* by the valet himself, for Titmouse was already sufficiently provided.) Off, however, he drove, and succeeded at length in reaching the Oxford Street establishment, before the door of which five or six carriages were standing. I should say that, at the moment of Mr. Titmouse's strutting into that scene of his former miserable servitude, he experienced a gush of delight which was sufficient to efface all recollection of the misery, privation, and oppression, endured in his early days. There was presently an evident

flutter among the gentlemen engaged behind the counter—for—it must be "the great Mr. Titmouse!" Tagrag, catching sight of him, bounced out of his little room, and bustled up to him through the crowd of customers, bowing, scraping, blushing, and rubbing his hands, full of pleasurable excitement, and exhibiting the most profound obsequiousness.

"Hope you're well, sir," he commenced in a low tone, but instantly added, in a louder tone, observing that Titmouse had come upon business, "what can I have the honour to do for you, sir, this morning?" And handing him a stool, Tagrag, with a respectful air, received a very liberal order from Mr. Titmouse, and minuted it down in his memorandum book.

"Dear me, sir, is that your cab?" said Tagrag, as having accompanied Titmouse, bowing every step, to the door, they both stood there for a moment, "I never saw such a beautiful turn-out in my life, sir—"

"Ya—a—s. Pretty well—pretty well; but that young rascal of mine's dirtied one of his boots a little—dem him!" and he looked terrors at the tiger.

"Oh dear!—so he has; shall I wipe it off, sir? *Do* let me—"

"No, it don't signify much. By the way, Mr. Tagrag," added Mr. Titmouse in a drawling way, "all well at—at—demme if I've not this moment forgot the name of your place in the country—"

"Satin Lodge, sir," said Tagrag, meekly, but with infinite inward uneasiness.

"Oh—ay, to be sure. One sees, 'pon my soul, such a lot of places—but—all well?"

"All very well, indeed, sir; and constantly talking of you, sir."

"Ah—well! My compliments"—here he drew on his second glove, and moved towards his cab, Tagrag accompanying him—"glad they're well. If ever I'm driving that way—good day!" In popped Titmouse—crack went his whip—away darted the horse—Tagrag following it with an admiring and anxious eye.

As Mr. Titmouse sat in his new vehicle, on his way to the Park, dressed in the extreme of the mode, his glossy hat perched sideways on his bushy, well-oiled,

but somewhat mottled hair; his surtout lined with velvet; his full satin stock, spangled with inwrought gold flowers, and with two splendid pins, connected together with delicate double gold chains; his shirt-collars turned down over his stock; his chased gold eyeglass stuck in his right eye; the stiff wristbands of his shirt turned back over his coat cuffs; and his hands in snowy kid gloves, holding his whip and reins: when he considered the exquisite figure he must thus present to the eye of all beholders, and gave them credit for gazing at him with the same feelings which similar sights had, but a few months before, called forth in *his* despairing breast, his little cup of happiness was full, and even brimming over. This, though I doubt whether it was a just reflection, was still a very natural one; for he knew what his own feelings were, though not how weak and absurd they were, and of course judged of others by himself. If the Marquis of Whigborough, with his £200,000 a-year, and 5000 independent voters at his command, were on his way down to the House, absorbed with anxiety as to the effect of the final threat he was going to make to the Minister, that, unless he had a few strawberry leaves promised him, he would feel it his duty to record his vote against the great bill for "*Giving Every Body Every Thing*," which stood for a third reading that evening; or if the great Duke of Thunderbolt, a glance of whose eye, or a wave of his hand, would light up an European war, and who was balancing in his mind the fate of millions of mankind, as depending upon his fiat for peace or war—I say that if both or either of these personages had passed or met Titmouse, in their cabs, which they were mechanically urging onward, so absorbed the while with their own thoughts, that they scarce knew whether they were in a cab or a hand-barrow, in which latter, had it been before their gates, either of them might in his abstraction have seated himself; Titmouse's superior acquaintance with human nature assured him that the sight of his tip-top turn-out could not fail of attracting their attention, and nettling their pride. Whether Milton, if cast on a desolate island, but with the means of writing *Paradise Lost*, would have done so, had he been certain that no human eye would ever peruse a line of it; or whether

Mr. Titmouse, had he been suddenly deposited, in his splendid cab, in the midst of the desert of Sahara, with not one of his species to fix an envying eye upon him, would nevertheless have experienced a great measure of satisfaction, I am not prepared to say. As, however, every condition of life has its mixture of good and evil, so, if Titmouse had been placed in the midst of the aforesaid desert at the time when he was last before the reader, instead of dashing along Oxford street, he would have escaped certain difficulties and dangers which he presently encountered. Had an ape, not acquainted with the science of driving, been put into Titmouse's place, he would probably have driven much in the same style, though he would have had greatly the advantage over his rival in respect of his simple and natural appearance; being, to the eye of correct taste, "when unadorned, adorned the most." Mr. Titmouse, in spite of the assistance to his sight which he derived from his glass, was continually coming into collision with the vehicles which met and passed him, on his way to Cumberland Gate. He got into no fewer than four distinct *rows* (to say nothing of the flying curses which he received in passing) between the point I have named and Mr. Tagrag's premises. But as he was by no means destitute of spirit, he sate in his cab, on these four occasions, cursing and blaspheming like a little fiend, till he almost brought tears of vexation into the eyes of one or two of his opponents, (cads, cab-drivers, watermen, hackney-coachmen, carters, stage-coachmen, market-gardeners, and draymen,) who unexpectedly found their own weapons—*i. e.* slang—wielded with such superior power and effect, for once in a way, by a swell—an aristocrat. The more manly of his opponents were filled with respect for the possessor of such powers. Still it was unpleasant for a person of Mr. Titmouse's distinction to be engaged in these conflicts; and he would have given the world to be able to conquer his conceit so far as to summon his little tiger within, and surrender to him the reins. Such a ridiculous confession of his own incapacity, however, he could not think of, and he got into several little disturbances in the Park; after which he drove home: the battered cab had to be taken to the maker's, where the

injuries it had sustained were repaired for the trifling sum of twenty pounds.

The eminent position secured for Titmouse by the masterly genius of Mr. Bladdery Pip, was continued and strengthened by much more substantial claims upon the respect of society, possessed by the first-named gentleman. Rumour is a dame that always looks at objects through very strong magnifying glasses; and guided by what she saw, she soon gave out that Titmouse was patron of three boroughs, had a clear rent-roll of thirty thousand a-year, and had already received nearly a hundred thousand pounds in hard cash from the previous proprietor of his estates, as a compensation for the back rents, which that usurper had been for so many years in the receipt of. Then he was very near in succession to the ancient and distinguished Barony of Drelincourt, and the extensive estates thereto annexed. He was young; by no means ill-looking; and was—unmarried. Under the mask of *naïveté* and eccentricity, it was believed that he concealed great natural acuteness, for the purpose of ascertaining who were his real and who only his pretended friends and well-wishers; and that his noble relatives had given in to his little scheme for the purpose of aiding him in the important discovery upon which he was bent. Infinite effect was thus given to the earl's introductions. Wherever Titmouse went he found new and delightful acquaintances; and invitations to dinners, balls, routs, soirées, came showering daily into his rooms at the Albany, where also were left innumerable cards, bearing names of very high fashion. All who had daughters or sisters in the market, paid eager and persevering court to Mr. Titmouse, and still more so to the Earl of Dreddlington and Lady Cecilia, his august *sponsors;* so that—such being the will of that merry jade Fortune—they who had once regarded him as an object only of shuddering disgust and ineffable contempt, and had been disposed to order their servants to show him out again into the streets, were now, in a manner, *magnified and made honourable* by means of their connexion with him; or rather, society, through his means, had become suddenly sensible of the commanding qualities and pretensions of the Earl of Dreddlington and the Lady Cecilia. In the ball-room—at Almacks' even—how many young

men, handsome, accomplished, and of real consequence, applied in vain for the hand of haughty beauty, which Mr. Titmouse had only to ask for, and have! Whose was the opera-box into which he might not drop as a welcome visiter, and be seen lounging in envied familiarity with its fair and brilliant inmates? Were there not mothers of high fashion, of stately pride, of sounding rank, who would have humbled themselves before Titmouse, if thereby he could have been brought a suitor to the feet of one of their daughters? But it was not over the fair sex alone that the magic of Mr. Titmouse's name and pretensions had obtained this great and sudden ascendency, he excited no small attention among men of fashion—great numbers of whom quickly recognised in him one very fit to become their butt and their dupe. What signified it to men secure of their own position in society, that they were seen openly associating with one so outrageously absurd in his dress—and vulgar and ignorant beyond all example? So long as he bled freely, and trotted out briskly and willingly, his eccentricities could be not merely tolerated, but humoured. Take, for instance, the gay and popular Marquis Gants-Jaunes de Millefleurs; but he is worth a word or two of description, because of the position he had contrived to acquire and retain, and the influence which he managed to exercise over a considerable portion of London society. The post he was anxious to secure was that of the leader of *ton;* and he wished it to appear that that was the sole object of his ambition. While, however, he affected to be entirely engrossed by such matters as devising new and exquisite variations of dress and equipage, he was, in reality, bent upon graver pursuits—upon gratifying his own licentious tastes and inclinations with secrecy and impunity. He despised folly, cultivating and practising only vice, in which he was, in a manner, an epicure. He was now about his forty-second year, had been handsome, was of bland and fascinating address, variously accomplished, of exquisite tact, of most refined taste; there was a slight fulness and puffiness about his features, an expression in his eye, which spoke of *satiety*—and the fact was so. He was a very proud, selfish, heartless, person; but these qualities he contrived to disguise from many of even his most inti-

mate associates. An object of constant anxiety to him was, to ingratiate himself with the younger and weaker branches of the aristocracy, in order to secure a distinguished status in society; and he succeeded.

To gain this point, he taxed all his resources: never were so exquisitely blended, as in his instance, with a view to securing his *influence*, the qualities of dictator and parasite; he always appeared the *agreeable equal* of those whom, for his life, he dared not seriously have offended. He had no fortune; no visible means of making money—did not sensibly sponge upon his friends—nor fall into conspicuous embarrassments; yet he always lived in luxury—without money, he in some inconceivable manner always contrived to be in the possession of money's worth. He had a magical power of soothing querulous tradesmen. He had a knack of always keeping himself, his clique, his sayings and doings, before the eye of the public, in such a manner as to satisfy it that he was the acknowledged leader of fashion; yet it was really no such thing, it was a false fashion—there being all the difference between him and a man of real consequence in society, that there is between mock and real pearl, between paste and diamond. It was true that young men of sounding name and title were ever to be found in his train, thereby giving real countenance to one from whom they fancied that they themselves derived celebrity; thus enabling him to effect a lodgment in the outskirts of aristocracy; but he could not penetrate inland, so to speak, any more than foreign merchants could advance further than to Canton, in the dominions of the Emperor of China. He was only tolerated in the regions of real aristocracy—a fact of which he had a very galling consciousness, though it did not apparently disturb his equanimity, or interrupt the systematic and refined sycophancy by which alone he could secure his precarious position. With some sad exceptions, I think that Great Britain has reason to be proud of her aristocracy: I do not speak now of those gaudy flaunting personages, of either sex, who, by their excesses or eccentricities, are eternally obtruding themselves, their manners, dress, and equipage, upon the ear and eye of the public; but of those who occupy their exalted sphere in simplicity, in calmness, and in unobtrusive dignity and virtue.

I am no flatterer or idolator of the aristocracy. I have a profound sense of the necessity and advantage of the *institution:* but I could pay its members, personally, an honest homage only, after a stern and keen scrutiny into their personal pretension; thinking of them ever in the spirit of those memorable words of Scripture—"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," and that not hereafter only, but here also. No one would visit their faults and follies with a more unsparing severity than I; yet making all just allowances for their peculiar perils and temptations, exposed as they are, especially at the period of their entrance upon life, to sedulous and systematic sycophancy, too often also to artful and designing profligacy, can any thing excite greater indignation and disgust in the mind of a thoughtful and independent observer, than those instances, occasionally exhibited, of persons imagining that the possessors of rank enjoy a sort of prescriptive immunity from the consequences of misconduct?—

> —"Si præcipitem rapit ambitus atque libido—
> Incipit ipsorum contra te stare parentum
> Nobilitas, claramque facem præferre pudendis.
> Omne animi vitium tantò conspectius in se
> Crimen habet, quantò major qui peccat habetur."

To a thoughtless, an insolent, a profligate nobleman, I choose to address the dignified reproofs of the same stern satirist—

> —"Tumes alto Drusorum sanguine tanquam,
> Feceris ipse aliquid propter quod nobilis esses.
> —Miserum est alienæ incumbere famæ,
> Ne collapsa ruant subductis tecta columnis.
> Ergo, ut miremur *te*, non tua, primum aliquid da,
> Quod possim titulis incidere, præter honores,
> Quos illis, damus, et dedimus, quibus omnia debes.
> —*Malo pater tibi sit Thersites, dummodo tu sis*
> *Æacidæ similis, Vulcaniaque arma capessas,*
> *Quam te, Thersitæ similem, producat Achilles.*"

And I shall sum up what I have to say upon this head, in the notable language of the fine old Bishop Hall:—

"I confess I cannot honour blood without good quali-

* Juv. Sat. VIII. *passim.*

ties; nor spare it, with ill. There is nothing that I do more desire to be taught, than what is true nobility: what thanke is it to you that you are *born* well? If you could have lost this privilege of nature, I feare you had not been thus far noble: that you may not plead desert, you had this before you were; long ere you could either know or prevent it. You are deceived if you think this any other than the *body* of gentility. The *life* and *soule* of it is in noble and virtuous dispositions, in gallantnesse of spirit without haughtinesse, without insolence, without scornful overlinesse; shortly, in generous qualities, carriage, actions. See your error, and know that this demeanour doth not answer an honest birth."*

Such are *my* sentiments—those of a contented member of the middle classes, with whom are all his best and dearest sympathies; and who feels as stern a pride in his "Order," and determination to "*stand by it*," as ever was felt or avowed by the haughtiest aristocrat for *his*; of one who with very little personal acquaintance with the aristocracy, has yet had many opportunities of observing their conduct; and sincerely and cheerfully expresses his belief, that very, very many of them are worthy of all that they enjoy—are bright patterns of honour, generosity, loyalty, and virtue; that, indeed, of by far the greater proportion of them it may be said that they

> "Have borne their faculties so meek—have been
> So clear in their great office, that their virtues
> Will plead like angels;"

and finally, I say these are the sentiments of one who, if their order were in jeopardy, would, with the immense majority of his brethren of the middle classes, freely shed his blood in defence of that order; for their preservation is essential to the well-being of society, and their privileges are really ours.

To return, however, to the marquis. The means to which, as I have above explained, he resorted for the purpose, secured him a certain species of permanent popularity. In matters of dress and equipage, he could really set the fashion; and being something of a practical hu-

* Epistles, VI.—"*A Complaint of the Mis-education of our Gentry.*"

mourist, and desirous of frequent exhibitions of his power, in order to enhance his pretensions with his patrons—and also greatly applauded and indulged by the trades-people profiting by the vagaries of fashion, he was very capricious in the exercise of his influence. He seized the opportunity of the advent of my little hero, to display his powers very decisively. He waved his wand over Titmouse, and instantly transformed a little ass into a great lion. 'Twas the marquis, who with his own hand sketched off, from fancy, the portrait of Titmouse, causing it to be exhibited in almost every bookseller's shop window. He knew that, if he chose to make his appearance once or twice in the Parks, and leading streets and squares, in—for instance—the full and imposing evening costume of the clown at the theatre, with painted face, capacious white inexpressibles, and tasteful jacket—within a few days' time several thousands of clowns would make their appearance about town, turning it into a vast pantomime. Could a more striking instance of the marquis's power in such matters have been exhibited, than that which had actually occurred in the case of Titmouse? Soon after the novel of Tippitiwink had rendered our friend an object of public interest, the marquis happened, somewhere or other, to catch a glimpse of the preposterous little ape. His keen eye caught all Titmouse's personal peculiarities at a glance; and a day or two afterwards appeared in public, a sort of splendid edition of Titmouse—with quizzing-glass stuck in his eye and cigar in his mouth; taper ebony cane; tight surtout, with the snowy corner of a white handkerchief peeping out of the outside breast-pocket; hat with scarce any rim, perched slantingly on his head; satin stock bespangled with inwrought gold flowers; shirt-collar turned down; and that inimitable strut of his!—'Twas enough: the thoughtful young men about town were staggered for a moment; but their senses soon returned. The marquis had set the thing going; and within three days' time, that bitter wag had called forth a flight of *Titmice* that would have reminded you, for a moment, of the visitation of locusts brought upon Egypt by Moses.

Thus was brought about the state of things recorded towards the close of the last portion of this history. As soon as the marquis had seen a few of the leading fools

about town fairly in the fashion, he resumed his former rigid simplicity of attire, and, accompanied by a friend or two in his confidence, walked about the town enjoying his triumph; witnessing his trophies—"Tittlebats" and "Titmouse-ties" filling the shop windows on the week-days, and peopling the streets on Sundays. The marquis was not long in obtaining an introduction to the quaint little *millionaire*, whose reputation he had, conjointly with his distinguished friend Mr. Bladdery Pip, contributed so greatly to extend. Titmouse, who had often heard of him, looked upon him with inconceivable reverence, and accepted an invitation to one of the marquis's *recherché* Sunday dinners with a sort of tremulous ecstasy. Thither, on the appointed day, he went accordingly, and, by his original humour, afforded infinite amusement to the marquis's other guests. 'Twas lucky for Titmouse that, getting dreadfully drunk very early in the evening, he was quite incapacitated from accompanying his brilliant and good natured host to one or two scenes of fashionable entertainment, as had been arranged, in St. James's street.

Now, do let us pause to ask whether this poor little creature was not to be pitied? Did he not seem to have been plucked out of his own sphere of safe and comparatively happy obscurity, only in order to become every one's game—an object of every body's cupidity and cruelty? May he not be compared to the flying fish, who, springing out of the water to avoid his deadly pursuer there, is instantly pounced upon by his ravenous assailants in the air? In the lower, and in the upper regions of society, was not this the condition of poor Tittlebat Titmouse? Was not his long-coveted advancement merely a transition from scenes of vulgar to refined rapacity? Had he, ever since "*luck* had happened to him," had one single *friend* to whisper in his ear one word of pity and of disinterested counsel?

In the splendid regions which he had entered, who regarded him otherwise than as a legitimate object for plunder or ridicule, the latter disguised by the *designing* only? Was not even his dignified and exemplary old kinsman, the Earl of Dreddlington, Right Honourable as he was, influenced solely by considerations of paltry self-interest? Had he not his own ridiculous and mercenary

designs to accomplish, amidst all the attentions he vouchsafed to bestow upon Titmouse? 'Twas, I think, old Hobbes of Malmesbury who held, that the natural state of mankind was one of war with each other. One really sees a good deal in life, especially after tracing the progress of society, that would seem to give some colour to so strange a notion. 'Twas, of course, at first a matter of downright fisticuffs—of physical strife, occasioned, in a great measure, by our natural tendencies, according to him of Malmesbury; and aggravated by the desire every body had, to take away from every body else what he had. Have you ever seen a drop of unclean water through the medium of the astounding hydro-oxygen microscope, and shuddered at sight of frightful creatures there made apparent—a spectacle which must have brought tears of delight into the eyes of the old philosopher I have been mentioning, on account of the vivid illustration it would have afforded of his theory? I have several times witnessed what I am alluding to, and I always think, when I see the direful conflict that goes on in these drops of water, "when Greek meets Greek," of Titmouse and his enemies. In the progress of society we have, in a measure, dropped the physical part of the business; and instead of punching, scratching, kicking, biting, and knocking down one another, true to the original principles of our nature, we are all endeavouring to circumvent one another; every body is trying to take every body in; the moment that one of us has got together a thing or two, he is pounced upon by his neighbour, who in his turn falls a prey to another, and so on in endless succession. We cannot help ourselves, though we are splitting our heads to discover devices, by way of laws, to restrain this propensity of our nature: it will not do; we are all overreaching, cheating, swindling, robbing one another, and, if necessary, are ready to maim and murder one another in the prosecution of our designs. So is it with nations as with individuals, and minor collections of individuals. Truly, truly, we are a precious set, whether the sage of Malmesbury be right or wrong in his speculations.

The more that the Earl and Lady Cecilia perceived of Titmouse's popularity, the more eager were they in parading their connexion with him, and openly investing

him with the character of a protegé. In addition to this, the Lady Cecilia had begun to have now and then a glimmering notion of the objects which the earl was contemplating. If the earl took him down to the House of Lords, and having secured him a place at the bar, would, immediately on entering, walk up to him, and be seen for some time condescendingly pointing out to him the different peers by name, as they entered, and explaining to his intelligent auditor the period, and mode, and cause, of the creation and accession of many of them to their honours, and also the forms, ceremonies, and routine of business in the House; so Lady Cecilia was not remiss in availing herself, in her way, of the little opportunities which presented themselves. She invited him, for instance, one day early in the week to accompany them to church on the ensuing Sunday, and during the interval gave out amongst her intimate friends that they might expect to see Mr. Titmouse in her papa's pew. He accepted the invitation; and, on the arrival of the appointed hour, might have been seen in the earl's carriage, driving to afternoon service at the Reverend Morphine Velvet's chapel—Rosemary Chapel, near St. James's Square. 'Twas a fashionable chapel, a chapel *of Ease;* rightly so called, for it was a very *easy* mode of worship, discipline, and doctrine that was there practised and inculcated.

If I may not irreverently adopt the language of scripture, but apply it very differently, I should say that Mr. Morphine Velvet's yoke was *very* "easy," his burden *very* "light." He was a popular preacher; middle aged; sleek, serene, solemn in his person and demeanour. He had a very gentlemanlike appearance in the pulpit and reading desk. There was a sort of soothing, winning, elegance and tenderness in the tone and manner in which he *prayed* and *besought* his dearly-beloved brethen, as many as were there present, to accompany him, their bland and graceful pastor, to the throne of the heavenly grace. Fit leader was he of such a flock! He read the prayers remarkably well, in a quiet and subdued tone, very distinctly, and with marked emphasis and intonation, having sedulously studied how to read the service under a crack theatrical teacher of elocution, who had given him several "points"—in fact, a new reading entirely—of one of the

clauses in the Lord's Prayer, and which, he had the gratification of perceiving, produced a striking, if not, indeed, a startling effect. On the little finger of the hand which he used most, was to be observed the sparkle of a diamond ring; and there was a sort of careless grace in the curl of his hair, which it had taken his hair-dresser at least half an hour, before Mr. Morphine's leaving home for his chapel, to effect. In the pulpit he was calm and fluent. He rightly considered that the pulpit ought not to be the scene for attempting intellectual display; he took care, therefore, that there should be nothing in his sermons to arrest the understanding, or unprofitably occupy it, addressing himself entirely to the feelings and fancy of his cultivated audience, in frequently interesting compositions. On the occasion I am speaking of, he took for his text a fearful passage of Scripture, 2 Cor. iv. 3.—"*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*" If any words were calculated to startle such a congregation as was arrayed before Mr. Velvet, out of their guilty and fatal apathy, were not these? Ought not their minister to have looked round him and trembled? So one would have thought; but "*dear* Mr. Velvet" knew his mission and his flock better. He presented them with an elegant description of heaven, with its crystal battlements, its jasper walls, its buildings of pure gold, its foundations of precious stones; its balmy air, its sounds of mysterious melody, its overflowing fulness of everlasting happiness—amidst which friends, parted upon earth by the cruel stroke of death, recognise and are reunited to each other, never more to pronounce the agonizing word "adieu!" And would his dear hearers be content to lose all this—content to *enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?* Forbid it, eternal mercy! But lest he should alarm his hearers, he took the opportunlty to enforce and illustrate the consolatory truth, that

> "Religion never was design'd
> To make our pleasures less;"

and presently, resuming the thread of his discourse, went on to speak of the really serious consequences attending a persevering indifference to religion; and he went on to

give striking instances of it in the merchant in his counting-house and on 'change; the lawyer in his office; the tradesman in his shop; the operative in the manufactory; showing how each was absorbed in his calling—labouring for the meat which perisheth, till they had lost all appetite and relish for spiritual food, and never once troubled themselves about "the momentous concerns of hereafter." Upon these topics he dwelt with such force and feeling, that he sent his distinguished congregation away—those of them, at least, who could retain any recollection of what they heard for five minutes after entering their carriages—fearing that there was a very black look-out, indeed, for the kind of persons that Mr. Velvet had mentioned—tailors, milliners, mercers, jewellers, and so forth; and who added graver offences, and of a more positive character, to the misconduct which had been pointed out—in their extortion and their rapacity! Would that some of them had been present! Thus was it that Mr. Velvet sent away his hearers overflowing with Christian sympathy; very well pleased with Mr. Velvet, but infinitely better pleased with themselves.

The deep impression which he had made was evidenced by a note he received that evening from the Duchess of Broadacre, most earnestly begging permission to copy his "beautiful sermon," in order to send it to her sister, Lady Belle Almacks, who was ill of a decline at Naples. About that time, I may as well here mention, there came out an engraved portrait of "the Rev. Morphine Velvet, M. A., Minister, Rosemary Chapel, St. James's"—a charming picture it was, representing Mr. Morphine in pulpit costume and attitude, with hands gracefully outstretched, and his face directed upward with a heavenly expression, suggesting to you the possibility that some fine day, when his hearers least expected it, he might gently rise out of his pulpit, into the air, like Stephen, with heaven open before him, and *be no more seen of men!* Happy is *that* people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose minister is the Rev. Morphine Velvet!

Four or five carriages had to set down before that containing the Earl of Dreddlington, Lady Cecilia, and Mr. Titmouse, could draw up; by which time there had accumulated as many in its rear, so eager were the pious

aristocrats to get into this holy retreat. As Titmouse, holding his hat and cane in one hand, while with the other he arranged his hair, strutted up the centre aisle, following the Earl and Lady Cecilia, he could hardly repress the exultation with which he thought of a former visit of his to that very chapel some two years before. *Then*, on attempting to enter the body of the chapel, the verges had politely but firmly repulsed him; on which, swelling with vexation, he had ascended to the gallery, where, after being kept standing for ten minutes at least, he had been beckoned by the pew-opener towards, and squeezed into, the furthermost pew, close at the back of the organ, and in which said pew were only four footmen besides himself; and if he was disgusted with his mere contiguity, guess what must have been his feelings when the footman nearest to him good-naturedly forced upon him a part of his prayer-book, which Titmouse, ready to spit in his face, held with his finger and thumb, as though it had been the tail of a snake. *Now*, how changed was all! He had become an aristocrat; in his veins ran some of the richest and oldest blood in the country; his brow might ere long be graced by the coronet which King Henry II. had placed upon the brow of the founder of his family, some seven hundred years before; and a tall footman, with powdered head, glistening silver shoulder-knot, and sky-blue livery, and carrying in a bag the gilded implements of devotion, be humbly following behind him! What a remarkable and vivid contrast between his present and his former circumstances, was present at that moment to his reflecting mind! As he stood, his hat covering his face, in an attitude of devotion—"I wonder," thought he, "what all these nobs and swells would say, if they knew how I had worshipped here on the last time;" and again—"'Pon my life, what would I give for—say Huckaback—to see me just now!" What an elegant and fashionable air the congregation wore! Surely there must be something in religion when people such as were around him came so punctually to church, and behaved so seriously! The members of that congregation were, indeed, exemplary in their strict discharge of their public religious duties! Scarce one of them was there that had not been at the opera, till half-past twelve over night; the dulcet notes

of the singers still thrilling in their ears, the graceful attitudes of the dancers still present to their eyes; every previous night of the week had they been engaged in the brilliant ball-room, and whirled in the mazes of the voluptuous waltz, or glittering in the picturesque splendour of fancy dress, till three, four, and five o'clock in the morning; yet here they were, in spite of all their exhaustion, testified by the heavy eye, the ill-suppressed yawns, the languor and ennui visible in their countenances, prepared to accompany their gentle pastor, "with a pure heart and humble voice," unto the throne of the heavenly grace, to acknowledge, with lively emotion, that they "had followed too much the devices and desires of their own hearts;" praying for "mercy upon them, miserable offenders," that God would "restore them being penitent," so that "they might thereafter lead a godly, righteous, and sober life." Here they were, punctual to their time, decorous in manners, devout in spirit, earnest and sincere in repentance and good resolutions—knowing. the while, how would be spent the remainder of the season of their lives; and yet resolving to attend to the affectionate entreaties of Mr. Velvet, to be "not hearers only, but doers of the word."

Generally, I should say that the state of mind of most, if not all of those present, was analogous to that of persons who go and sit in the pump-room, to drink the Bath or Cheltenham waters. Every body did the same thing; and each hoped that, while sitting in his pew, what he heard would, like what he drank at the pump-room, in some secret mode of operation, insensibly benefit the hearer, without subjecting him to any unpleasant restraint or discipline—without requiring active exertion, or inconvenience, or sacrifice. This will give you a pretty accurate notion of Lord Dreddlington's state of mind upon the present occasion. With his gold glasses on, he followed with his eye, and also with his voice, every word of the prayers, with rigid accuracy and unwavering earnestness; but as soon as Mr. Velvet had mounted his pulpit, and risen to deliver his discourse, the earl quietly folded his arms, closed his eyes, and, in an attentive posture, composed himself to sleep. Lady Cecilia sate beside him perfectly motionless during the whole sermon, her eyes fixed languidly upon the preacher. As for Titmouse, he

bore it pretty well for about five minutes; then he pulled his gloves off and on at least twenty times; then he twisted his handkerchief round his fingers; then he looked with a vexed air at his watch; then he stuck his glass in his eye, and stared about him. By the time that Mr. Velvet had ceased, Titmouse had conceived a very great dislike to him, and was indeed in a fretful humour. But when the organ struck up, and they rose to go; when he mingled with the soft, crushing, fluttering, rustling satin-clad throng—nodding to one, bowing to another, and, shaking hands with a third, he felt "himself again." The only difference between him and those around him was that they had learned to bear with calm fortitude what had so severely tried his temper. All were glad to get out; the crash of carriages at the door was music in their ears—the throng of servants delightful objects to their eyes—they were, in short, in the dear world again, and breathed as freely as ever.

Mr. Titmouse took leave of the Earl and Lady Cecilia at their carriage-door, having ordered his cab to be in waiting—as it was; and entering it, he drove about leisurely till it was time to think of dressing for dinner. He had accepted an invitation to dine with a party of officers in the Guards, and a merry time they had on't. Titmouse in due time got blind drunk; and then one of his companions, rapidly advancing towards the same happy state, seized the opportunity with a burned cork, to blacken poor Titmouse's face all over—who, therefore, was pronounced to bear a very close resemblance to one of the black boys belonging to the band of the regiment, and thus afforded as much fun to his friends when dead drunk as when sober. As he was quite incapable of taking care of himself, they put a servant with him into his cab, (judging his little tiger to be unequal to the responsiblity).

Titmouse passed a sad night, but got better towards the middle of the ensuing day; when he was sufficiently recovered to receive two visiters. One of them was young Lord Frederic Feather, (accompanied by a friend,) both of whom had dined in company with Titmouse overnight; and his lordship it was, who, having decorated Titmouse's countenance in the way I have described—so

as to throw his valet almost into fits on seeing him brought home—imagining it might possibly come to his ears who it was that had done him such a favour, had come to acknowledge and apologize for it frankly and promptly. When, however, he perceived what a fool he had got to deal with, he suddenly changed his course—declared that Titmouse had not only done it himself, but had there presumed to act similarly towards his lordship, whose friend corroborated the charge—and they had called to receive, in private, an apology. Titmouse's breath seemed taken away on first hearing this astounding version of the affair. He swore he had done nothing of the sort, but had suffered a good deal; then, dropping a little on observing the stern looks of his companions, protested "he did not recollect" any thing of the sort; on which they smiled good-naturedly, and said that *that* was very possible. Then Titmouse made the requisite apology; and thus this awkward affair ended.

Lord Frederic continued for some time with Titmouse in pleasant chat; for he foresaw that, "hard-up" as he frequently was, Mr. Titmouse was a friend who might be exceedingly serviceable. In fact, poor Lord Frederic could, on that very occasion, have almost gone on his knees for a check of Mr. Titmouse upon his bankers, for three or four hundred pounds. Oh, thought Lord Frederic, what would *he* have given to be in Titmouse's position, with his twenty thousand a-year, and a hundred thousand pounds of hard cash! But, as the reader well knows, poor Titmouse's resources, ample as they were, were upon a far less splendid scale than was supposed. Partly from inclination, and partly through a temporary sense of embarrassment, occasioned by the want of ready money, Titmouse did not spend a tenth part of the sum which it had been everywhere supposed he could disburse freely on all hands, which occasioned him to be given credit for possessing all that rumour assigned to him; and, moreover, for a disposition not to squander it. He had on several occasions been induced to try his hand at ecarté, rouge et noir, and hazard; and had, on the first occasion or two, been a little hurried away through deference to his distinguished associates, and bled rather freely; but when he found that it was a matter of business—that he must

pay—and felt his purse growing lighter, and his pocket-book, in which he kept his bank-notes, rapidly shrinking in dimensions as the evening wore on, he experienced vivid alarm and disgust, and an increasing disinclination to be victimized; and his aversion to play was infinitely strengthened by the frequent cautions of the Earl of Dreddlington.

But there was one step in Mr. Titmouse's upward progress which he presently took, and which is worthy of special mention; I mean his presentation at court by the Earl of Dreddlington. The necessity for such a step was explained to Titmouse, by his illustrious kinsman, a day or two after the appearance of the ordinary official announcement of the next levee. This momentous affair was broached by the earl, one day after dinner, with an air of deep anxiety and interest. Indeed, had that stately and solemn old simpleton been instructing his gaping protegé in the minutely-awful etiquette requisite for the due discharge of his duties as an ambassador sent upon a delicate and embarrassing mission to the court of his Sacred Majesty the King of Sulkypunctilio, he could not have appeared more penetrated by a sense of the responsibility he was incurring. He commenced by giving Timouse a very long history of the origin and progress of such ceremonies, and a minute account of the practical manner of their observance, all of which, however, was to Titmouse only like breathing upon a mirror—passing as quickly out of one ear as it had entered into the other. When, however, the earl came to the point of dress, Titmouse was indeed "a thing all ear, all eye," his faculties being stimulated to their utmost. The next morning he hurried off to his tailor, to order a court dress. When it had been brought to his rooms, and he had put it on, upon returning to his room in his new and imposing costume, and glancing at his figure in the glass, his face fell; he felt infinitely disappointed. It is to be remembered that he had not on lace ruffles at his coat-cuffs, nor on his shirt front. After gazing at himself for a few moments in silence, he suddenly snapped his fingers, and exclaimed to the tailor, who, with the valet, was standing beside him, "Curse me if I like this thing at all!"

"Not like it, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Clipclose, with astonishment.

"No, I don't, demme! Is *this* a court dress? It's a quaker's made into a footman's! 'Pon my soul, I look the exact image of a footman; and a devilish vulgar one, too!" The two individuals beside him turned suddenly away from him, and from one another, and from their noses there issued the sounds of ill-suppressed laughter.

"Oh, sir—I beg a thousand pardons!"—quickly exclaimed Mr. Clipclose, "what can I have been thinking about? There's the sword—we've quite forgot it!"

"Ah—'pon my life, I thought there was *something* wrong!" quoth Titmouse, as Mr. Clipclose, having brought the sword from the other end of the room, where he had laid it upon entering, buckled it on.

"I flatter myself that *now*, sir"—commenced he.

"Ya—as—Quite the correct thing! 'Pon my soul, most uncommon striking!"—exclaimed Titmouse, glancing at his figure in the glass with a triumphant smile. "Isn't it odd, now, that this sword should make all the difference between me and a footman, by Jove!" Here his two companions were seized with a simultaneous fit of coughing.

"Ah, ha—it's *so*, a'n't it?" continued Titmouse, his eyes glued to the glass.

"Certainly, sir: it undoubtedly gives—what shall I call it? a grace—a finish—a sort of commanding—especially to a figure that becomes it"—he continued, with cool assurance, observing that the valet understood him. "But—may I, sir, take so great a liberty? If you are not accustomed to wear a sword—as I think you said you had not been at court before—I beg to remind you that it will require particular care to manage it, and prevent it from getting between"——

"Demme, sir!" exclaimed Titmouse, starting aside with an offended air—"d'ye think I don't know how to manage a sword? By all that's tremendous"—and plucking the taper weapon out of its scabbard, he waved it over his head, and throwing himself into the first position—he had latterly paid a good deal of attention to fencing—and with rather an excited air, went through several of

the preliminary movements. 'Twas a subject for a painter, and exhibited a very striking spectacle—as an instance of power silently concentrated, and ready to be put forth upon an adequate occasion. The tailor and the valet, who stood separate from each other, and at a safe and respectful distance from Mr. Titmouse, gazed with silent admiration at him.

When the great day arrived—Titmouse having thought of scarce any thing else in the interval, and teased every one he met with his endless questions and childish observations on the subject—he drove up, at the appointed hour, to the Earl of Dreddlington's, whose carriage, with an appearance of greater state than usual about it, was standing at the door.

On alighting from his cab, he skipped so nimbly up stairs, that he could not have had time to observe the amusement which his figure occasioned even to the well-disciplined servants of the Earl of Dreddlington. Much allowance ought to have been made for them. Think of Mr. Titmouse's little knee-breeches, white silks, silver shoe-buckles, shirt-ruffles and frills, coat, bag, and sword; and his hair, plastered up with bear's grease, parted down the middle of his head, and curling out boldly over each temple; and his open countenance irradiated with a subdued smile of triumph and excitement! On entering the drawing-room, he beheld a really striking object—the earl in court costume, wearing his general's uniform, with all his glistening orders, standing in readiness to set off, and holding in his hand his cap, with its snowy plume. His posture was at once easy and commanding. Had he been standing to Sir Thomas Laurence, he could not have disposed himself more effectively. Lady Cecilia was sitting on the sofa, leaning back, and languidly talking to him; and, from the start they both gave on Titmouse's entrance, it was plain that they could not have calculated upon the extraordinary transmogrification he must have undergone, in assuming court costume. For a moment or two, each was as severely shocked as when his absurd figure had first presented itself in that drawing-room. "Oh, heavens!" murmured Lady Cecilia; while the earl seemed struck dumb by the approaching figure of Titmouse. That gentleman, however, was totally changed from the Titmouse

of a former day. He had now acquired a due sense of his personal importance, a just confidence in himself. Greatness had lost its former petrifying influence over him. And, as for his appearance on the present occasion, he had grown so familiar with it, as reflected in his glass, that it never occurred to him as being different with others who beheld him for the first time. At the same time, that candour upon which I pride myself urges me to state, that when Titmouse beheld the military air and superb equipments of the earl—notwithstanding that Titmouse, too, wore a sword—he felt himself *done*. He advanced, however, pretty confidently—bobbing about, first to Lady Cecilia, and then to the earl; and after a hasty salutation—"'Pon my life, my lord, I hope it's no offence, but your lordship *does* look most *particular* fine." The earl made no reply, but inclined towards him magnificently—not seeing the meaning and intention of Titmouse, but affronted by his words.

"May I ask what your lordship thinks of *me?* First time I ever appeared in this kind of thing, my lord—ha! ha, your lordship sees!"—As he spoke, his look and voice betrayed the overawing effects of the earl's splendid appearance—which was rapidly freezing up the springs of familiarity, if not indeed of flippancy, which were bubbling up within the little bosom of Titmouse, on his entering the room. His manner became involuntarily subdued and reverential. The Earl of Dreddlington in plain clothes, and in full court costume, were two very different persons; though his lordship would have been mortally affronted if he had known that any one thought so. However he now regretted having offered to take Titmouse to the levee, there was no escape from the calamity; so, after a few minutes' pause, he rang the bell, and announced his readiness to set off. Followed by Mr. Titmouse, his lordship slowly descended the stairs; and when he was within two or three steps of the hall floor, it distresses me to relate, that he fell nearly flat upon his face, and, but for his servants' rushing up, would have been seriously hurt. Poor Titmouse had been the occasion of this disaster; for his sword getting between his legs, down he went against the earl, who went naturally down upon the floor, as I have mentioned. Titmouse was not much hurt, but terribly

frightened, and went as pale as death when he looked at the earl, who appeared a little agitated, but, not having been really injured, soon recovered his self-possession. Profuse were poor Titmouse's apologies, as may be supposed; but much as he was distressed at what had taken place, a glance at the angry countenances with which the servants regarded him, as if inwardly cursing his stupidity and clumsiness, stirred up his spirit a little, and restored him to a measure of self-possession. He would have given a hundred pounds to have been able to discharge every one of them on the spot.

"Sir—enough has been said," quoth the earl, rather coldly and haughtily, tired at the multiplied apologies and excuses of Titmouse. "I thank God, sir, that I am not hurt, though, at my time of life, a fall is not a slight matter. Sir," continued the earl, bitterly, "*you* are not so much to blame as your tailor; he should have explained to you how to wear your sword!" With this, having cut Titmouse to the very quick, the earl motioned him towards the door: they soon entered the carriage; the door was closed; and, with a brace of footmen behind, away rolled these two truly distinguished subjects to pay their homage to majesty—which might well be proud of such homage. They both sate in silence for some time. At length—"Beg your lordship's pardon," quoth Titmouse, with some energy; "but I wish your lordship only knew how I hate this cursed skewer that's pinned to me;"—and he looked at his sword, as if he could have snapped it into halves, and thrown them through the window.

"Sir, I can appreciate your feelings. The sword was not to blame; and *you* have my forgiveness," replied the still ruffled earl.

"Much obliged to your lordship," replied Titmouse, in a somewhat different tone from any in which he had ever ventured to address his august companion; for he was beginning to feel confoundedly nettled at the bitter contemptuous manner which the earl observed towards him. He was also not a little enraged with himself; for he knew he had been in fault, and thought of the neglected advice of his tailor. So his natural insolence, like a reptile just beginning to recover from its long torpor, made a faint struggle to show itself—but in vain; he was quite cowed and over-

powered by the presence in which he was, and he wished heartily that he could have recalled even the few last words he had ventured to utter. The earl had observed it, though without appearing to do so. He was accustomed to control his feelings; and on the present occasion he exerted himself to do so, for fear of alienating Titmouse from him by any display of offended dignity.

"Sir, it is a very fine day," he observed, in a kind manner, after a stern silence of at least five minutes.

"Remarkably fine, my lord. I was just going to say so," replied Titmouse, greatly relieved; and presently they fell into their usual strain of conversation.

"We must learn to bear these little annoyances calmly," said the earl, graciously, on Titmouse's again alluding to his mishap:—"as for me, sir, a person in the station to which it has pleased Heaven to call me, for purposes of its own, has his peculiar and very grave anxieties—substantial and"—

He ceased suddenly. The carriage of his old rival, the Earl of Fitz-Warren, passed him; the latter waved his hand courteously; the former, with a bitter smile, was forced to do the same; and then relapsing into silence, showed that the iron was entering his very soul, affording a striking illustration of the truth of the observation he had been making to Titmouse. Soon, however, they had entered the scene of splendid hubbub, which at once occupied and excited both their minds. Without was the eager crowd, gazing with admiration and awe at each equipage, with its brilliant occupants, that dashed past them:—then the life-guardsmen, in glittering and formidable array, their long gleaming swords and polished helmets glancing and flashing in the sunlight. Within, were the tall yeomen of the guard, in velvet caps and scarlet uniforms, and with ponderous partisans, lining each side of the staircase—and who, being in the exact military costume of the time of Henry the Eighth, forcibly recalled those days of pomp and pageantry to the well-informed mind of Mr. Titmouse

In short, there were all the grandeur, state, and ceremony that fence in the dread approaches to majesty. Fortunately, Titmouse was infinitely too much bewildered and flustered by the novel splendour around him, to be aware of the ill-concealed laughter which his appearance

excited on all hands. In due course he was borne on and issued in due form into the presence-chamber—into the immediate presence of majesty. His heart palpitated: his dazzled eye caught a hasty glimpse of a tall magnificent figure standing before a throne. Advancing—scarce aware whether on his head or his heels—he reverently paid his homage—then rising, was promptly ushered out through a different door; with no distinct impression of any thing that he had passed;—'twas all a dazzling blaze of glory—a dim vision of awe!

Little was he aware, poor soul, that the king had required him to be pointed out upon his approach, having heard of his celebrity in society, and that he had the distinguished honour of occasioning to majesty a very great effort to keep its countenance. It was not till after he had quitted the palace for some time, that be breathed freely again. Then he began to feel as if a vast change had been effected in him by some mysterious and awful agency—that he was penetrated and pervaded, as it were, by the subtle essence of royalty—like one that had experienced the sudden, strange, thrilling, potent, influence of electricity. He imagined that now the stamp of greatness had been impressed upon him; his pretensions ratified by the highest authority upon earth. 'Twas as if wine had been poured into a stream, intoxicating the *tittlebats* swimming about in it. As for me, seriously speaking, I question whether it was any thing more than an imaginary change that had come over my friend. Though I should be sorry to cite against him an authority, couched in a language with which I have reason to believe he was not *critically* acquainted, I cannot help thinking that Horace must have had in his eye a Roman Titmouse, when he penned those bitter lines—

"Licèt superbus ambules pecuniâ
Fortuna non mutat genus.
—Videsne Sacram metiente te Viam
Cum bis ter ulnarum togâ,
Ut ora vertat hue et huc euntium,
Liberrima indignatio?
—'Sectus flagellis hic triumviralibus
Præconis ad fastidium,
Arat Falerni mille fundi jugera,
Et Appiam mannis terit?'"*

* Hor. Carm. V., iv.

While Titmouse was making this splendid figure in the upper regions of society, and forming there every hour new and brilliant connexions and associations—in a perfect whirl of pleasure from morning to night—he did not ungratefully manifest a total forgetfulness of the amiable persons with whom he had been so familiar, and from whom he had received so many good offices in his earlier days and humbler circumstances. Had it not, however—to give the devil his due—been for Gammon, (who was ever beside him, like a mysterious pilot, secretly steering his little bark amidst the strange, splendid, but dangerous seas which it had now to navigate,) I fear that, with Titmouse, it would have been—out of sight out of mind. But Gammon, ever watchful over the real interests of his charge, and also delighted to become the medium of conferring favours upon others, conveyed from time to time, to the interesting family of the Tagrags, special marks of Mr. Titmouse's courtesy and gratitude. At one time, a haunch of *doe* venison would find its way to Mr. Tagrag, to whom Gammon justly considered that the distinction between buck and doe was unknown; at another, a fine work-box and a beautifully bound Bible found its way to good Mrs. Tagrag; and, lastly, a gay guitar to Miss Tagrag, who forthwith began twang-twang, tang-a-tang tang-it, from morning to night, thinking with ecstasy of its dear distinguished donor; who, together with Mr. Gammon, had, some time afterwards, the unspeakable gratification, on occasion of their being invited to dine at Satin Lodge, of hearing her perform the following exquisite composition, for both the words and air of which she had been indebted to her music-master, a youth with black mustaches, long dark hair parted on his head, shirt collars à-la-Byron, and eyes full of inspiration.

TO HIM I LOVE.

1.

Affettuosamente.

Ah me! I feel the smart
Of Cupid's cruel dart
Quivering in my heart,
Heigho, ah! whew!

2.

With him I love
Swiftly time would move;
Allegro. With his cigar,
And my guitar,
We'd smoke and play
The livelong day,
Merrily, merrily!
Puff—puff—puff,
Tang-a, tang, tang!

3.

When he's not near me,
Adagio, et O! of life I'm weary—
con molto The world is dreary—
espressione. Mystic spirits of song,
Wreathed with cypress, come along!
And hear me! hear me!

Singing,
Heigho, heigho—
Teneramente. Tootle, tootle, too,
A—lackaday!

Such were the tender and melting strains which this fair creature (her voice a little reedy and squeaking to be sure) poured into the sensitive ear of Titmouse; and such are the strains by means of which, many and many a Miss Tagrag has captivated many and many a Titmouse; so that sentimental compositions of this sort are deservedly popular, and do honour to our musical and poetical character as a nation. I said that it was on the occasion of a dinner at Satin Lodge, that Mr. Titmouse and Mr. Gammon were favoured by hearing Miss Tagrag's voice, accompanying her guitar; for when Mr. Tagrag had sounded Mr. Gammon, and found that both he and Titmouse would be only too proud and happy to partake of his hospitality, they were invited. A very crack affair it was, (though I have not time to describe it)—given on a more splendid scale than Mr. Tagrag had ever ventured upon before. He brought a bottle of *champagne* all the way from town with his own hands, and kept it nice and cool in the kitchen cistern for three days beforehand; and there was fish, soup, roast mutton, and roast ducks, roast fowls, peas, cabbage, cauliflowers, potatoes, vege-

table marrows; there was an apple-pie, a plum-pudding, custards, creams, jelly, and a man to wait, hired from the tavern at the corner of the hill. It had not occurred to them to provide themselves with champagne glasses, so they managed as well as they could with the common ones—all but Titmouse, who with a sort of fashionable recklessness, to show how little he thought of it, poured out his champagne into his tumbler, which he two-thirds filled, and drank it off at a draft, Mr. Tagrag trying to disguise the inward spasm it occasioned him, by a grievous smile. He and Mrs. Tagrag exchanged anxious looks; the whole of their sole bottle of champagne was gone already—almost as soon as it had been opened!

"I always drink champagne out of a tumbler; I do—'pon my life," said Titmouse carelessly; it's a devilish deal more pleasant."

"Ye-e-s—of course it is, sir," said Mr. Tagrag, rather faintly. Shortly afterwards, Titmouse offered to take a glass of champagne with Miss Tagrag:—Her father's face flushed; and at length, with a bold effort, "Why, Mr. Titmouse," said he, trying desperately to look unconcerned—"the—the fact is, I never keep more than a dozen or so in my cellar—and most unfortunately I found this afternoon that six bottles had—burst—I assure you."

"'Pon my soul, sorry to hear it," quoth Titmouse; "must send you a dozen of my own—I always keep about fifty or a hundred dozen. Oh, I'll send you half-a-dozen!"

Tagrag scarcely knew, for a moment, whether he felt pleased or mortified at this stroke of delicate generosity. Thus it was that Titmouse evinced a disposition to shower marks of his favour and attachment upon the Tagrags, in obedience to the injunctions of Gammon, who assured him that it was of very great importance for him to secure the good graces of Mr. Tagrag.

So Mr. Titmouse now drove up to Satin Lodge in his cab, and then rode thither, followed by his stylish groom; and on one occasion, artful little scamp! happening to find no one at home but Miss Tagrag, he nevertheless alighted, and stayed for nearly ten minutes, behaving precisely in the manner of an accepted suitor, aware that he might do so with impunity since there was no witness present; a

little matter which had been suggested to him by Mr. Gammon. Poor Miss Tagrag's cheek he kissed with every appearance of ardour, protesting that she was a monstrous lovely creature; and he left her in a state of delighted excitement, imagining herself the fated mistress of ten thousand a-year, and the blooming bride of the gay and fashionable Mr. Titmouse. When her excellent parents heard of what had that day occurred between Mr. Titmouse and their daughter, they also looked upon the thing as quite settled. In the meanwhile, the stream of prosperity flowed steadily in upon Mr. Tagrag, his shop continuing crowded; his shopmen doubled in number:—in fact, he at length actually received, instead of giving payment, for allowing young men to serve a short time in so celebrated an establishment, in order that they might learn the first-rate style of doing business, and when established on their own account, write up over their doors—"Peter Tape, *late from Tagrag & Co., Oxford Street.*"

Determined to make hay while the sun shone, he resorted to several little devices for that purpose, such as a shirt front with frills in the shape of a capital "T," and of which, under the name of "*Titties*," he sold immense numbers amongst the inferior swells of London. At length it occurred to Gammon to suggest to Titmouse a mode of conferring upon his old friend and master a mark of permanent, public, and substantial distinction; and this was, the obtaining for him, through the Earl of Dreddlington, an appointment as one of the *royal tradesmen*—namely, draper and hosier to the King. When Mr. Tagrag's disinterested and indefatigable benefactor, Gammon, called one day in Oxford Street, and calling him for a moment out of the bustle of his crowded shop, mentioned the honour which Mr. Titmouse was bent upon doing his utmost, at Mr. Gammon's instance, to procure for Mr. Tagrag, that respectable person was quite at a loss for terms in which adequately to express his gratitude. Titmouse readily consented to name the thing to the great man, and urge it in the best way he could; and he performed his promise. The earl listened to his application with an air of anxiety. "Sir," said he, "the world is acquainted with my reluctance to ask favours of those in office. When I was in office myself, I felt the inconvenience of such ap-

plications abundantly. Besides, the appointment you have named, happens to be one of considerable importance, and requiring great influence to procure it. Consider, sir, the immense number of tradesmen there are of every description, of whom drapers and hosiers (according to the last returns laid before Parliament at the instance of my friend Lord Goose) are by far the most numerous. All of them are naturally ambitious of so high a distinction: yet, sir, observe, that there is only one king and one royal family to serve. My Lord Chamberlain is, I have no doubt, harassed by applicants for such honours as you have mentioned."

Hereat Titmouse got startled at the unexpected magnitude of the favour he had applied for; and, declaring that he did not care a curse for Tagrag, begged to withdraw his application. But the earl, with a mighty fine air, interrupted him—"Sir, you are not in the least presuming upon your relationship with me, nor do I think you overrate the influence I may happen—in short, sir, I will make it my business to see my Lord Ko-too this very day, and sound him upon the subject."

That same day an interview took place between the two distinguished noblemen, Lord Dreddlington and Lord Ko-too. Each approached the other upon stilts. After a display of the most delicate tact on the part of Lord Dreddlington, Lord Ko-too, who made a mighty piece of work of it, promised to consider of the application.

Within a day or two afterwards Mr. Tagrag received a letter from the Lord Chamberlain's office, notifying that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to appoint him draper and hosier to his Majesty! It occasioned him similar feelings of tumultuous pride and pleasure to that with which the Earl of Dreddlington would have received tidings of his long-coveted marquisate having been conferred upon him. He started off, within a quarter of an hour after the receipt of the letter, to a carver and gilder a few doors off, and gave orders for the immediate preparation of a first-rate cast, gilded, of the royal arms; which, in about a week's time, might be seen, a truly resplendent object, dazzlingly conspicuous over the central door of Mr. Tagrag's establishment, inspiring awe into the minds of passers-by, and envy into Mr. Tagrag's neighbours and

rivals. He immediately sent off letters of gratitude to Mr. Titmouse, and to "the Right Honourable, the Most Noble the Earl of Dreddlington;" to the latter personage, at the same time, forwarding a most splendid crimson satin flowered dressing-gown, as "an humble token of his gratitude for his lordship's mark of condescension."

Both the letter and the dressing-gown gave great satisfaction to the earl's valet, (than whom they never got any further,) and who, having tried on the dressing-gown, forthwith sate down and wrote a fine reply, in his lordship's name, to the note which had accompanied it, taking an opportunity to satisfy his conscience, by stating to the earl the next morning that a Mr. Tagrag had "*called*" to express his humble thanks for his lordship's goodness. He was, moreover, so well satisfied with this specimen of Mr. Tagrag's articles, that he forthwith opened an account with him, and sent a very liberal order to start with. The same thing occurred with several of the subordinate functionaries at the palace; and—to let my reader, a little prematurely however, into a secret—this was the extent of the additional custom which Mr. Tagrag's appointment secured him; and, even for these supplies, I never heard of his getting paid. But it did wonders with him in the estimation of the world. 'Twas evident that he was in a fair way of becoming the head house in the trade. His appointment caused no little ferment in that nook of the city with which he was connected. The worshipful Company of Squirtmakers elected him a member; and on a vacancy suddenly occurring in the ward to which he belonged, he was made a common council-man. Mr. Tagrag soon made a great stir as a champion of civil and religious liberty. As for church and county rates, in particular, he demonstrated the gross injustice of calling upon one who had no personal occasion for the use of a church, of a county bridge, a county jail, or a lunatic asylum, to be called upon to contribute to the support of them. A few speeches in this strain attracted so much attention to him, that several leading men in the ward (a very "liberal" one) intimated to him that he stood the best chance of succeeding to the honour of alderman on the next vacancy; and when he and Mrs. Tagrag were alone together, he would start the subject of the expenses of the

mayoralty with no little anxiety. He went to the chapel no longer on foot, but in a stylish sort of covered gig, with a kind of coal-scuttle-shaped box screwed on behind, into which was squeezed his footboy, (who, by the way, had a thin stripe of crimson let into each leg of his trousers, on Mr. Tagrag's appointment to an office under the crown;) he was also a trifle later in arriving at the chapel than he had been accustomed to be. He had a crimson velvet cushion running along the front of his pew, and the Bibles and Hymn-books very smartly gilded. He was presently advanced to the honoured post of Chief Deacon; and on one occasion, in the unexpected absence of the central luminary of the system, was asked to occupy the chair at a "great meeting" for the *Prevention of Civil and Religious Discord;* when he took the opportunity of declaring his opinion, which was enthusiastically cheered, that the principles of free trade ought to be applied to religion; and that the voluntary system was that which was designed by God, to secure the free blessings of competition. As for Satin Lodge, he stuck two little wings to it; and had one of the portraits of Tittlebat Titmouse (as Tippitiwink) hung over his drawing-room mantelpiece, splendidly framed and glazed.

Some little time after Tagrag had obtained the royal appointment which I have been so particular in recording, Gammon, *happening* to be passing his shop, stepped in, and observing Mr. Tagrag, very cordially greeted him; and then, as if it had been a thought of the moment only, without taking him from the shop, intimated that he had been westward engaged in completing the formal details of a re-arrangement of the greater portion of Mr. Titmouse's estates, upon which that gentleman had recently determined, and the sight of Mr. Tagrag's establishment had suggested to Mr. Gammon, that possibly Mr. Tagrag would feel gratified at being made a formal party to the transaction; as Mr. Gammon was sure that Mr. Titmouse would feel delighted at having associated with the Earl of Dreddlington, and one or two other persons of distinction, in the meditated arrangement, the name of so early and sincere a friend as Mr. Tagrag; "one who, moreover"—here Gammon paused, and gave a smile of inexpressible

significance, "but it was not for *him* to hint his suspicions"—

"Sir—I—I—*will* you come into my room?" interrupted Tagrag, rather eagerly, anxious to have a more definite indication of Mr. Gammon's opinion; but that gentleman, looking at his watch, pleaded want of time, and suddenly shaking Mr. Tagrag by the hand, moved towards the door.

"You were talking of signing, sir—Is it with you? I'll sign any thing!—any thing for Mr. Titmouse; only too proud—it's an honour to be in any way connected with him!" Gammon, on hearing this, felt in his pockets, as if he supposed that he should find there what he perfectly well knew had been lying ready, cut and dried, in his safe at Saffron Hill for months.

"I find I haven't got the little document with me," said he carelessly; "I suppose it's lying about with other loose papers at the office, or I may have left it at the earl's"—if Gammon meant here to allude to the Earl of Dreddlington, I think it only fair to say, that he had never been, for one instant in his life, in that great man's presence.

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Gammon," said Tagrag, considering—"Your office is at Saffron Hill? Well, I shall be passing your way to-morrow, about noon, and will look in and do all you wish."

"Could you arrange to meet the earl there?—or, as his lordship's movements are—ah, ha!—not very—"

"Should be most proud to meet his lordship, sir, to express my personal gratitude"—

"Oh, the earl never likes to be reminded, Mr. Tagrag, of any little courtesy or kindness he may have conferred! But if you will be with us about twelve, we can wait a little while; and if his lordship should not be punctual, we must even let you sign first, ah, ha!—and explain it to his lordship on his arrival, for I know your time's very precious, Mr. Tagrag! Gracious! Mr. Tagrag, what a constant stream of customers you have!—I heard it said, the other day, that you were rapidly absorbing all the leading business in your line in Oxford Street."

"You're very polite, Mr. Gammon! Certainly I've no reason to complain. I always keep the best of every

thing, and sell at the lowest prices, and spare no pains to please; and it's hard if"—

"How do you do?" quoth Gammon, suddenly starting, and bowing to some one on the other side of the way, whom he did *not* see. "Well, good-day, Mr. Tagrag—good-day! To-morrow at twelve, by the way?"

"I'm yours to command, Mr. Gammon," replied Tagrag: and so they parted. Just about twelve o'clock the next day, the latter, in a great bustle, saying he had fifty places to call at in the city, made his appearance at Saffron Hill.

"His lordship a'n't here, I suppose?" quoth he, after shaking hands with Mr. Quirk and Mr. Gammon. The latter gentleman pulled out his watch, and, shrugging his shoulders, said with a smile, "No—we'll give him half-an-hour's grace."

"Half-an-hour, my dear sir!" exclaimed Tagrag, "I could'nt stay so long if there were half-a-dozen lords coming. I am a man of business, he is'nt: first come first served, you know, eh? All fair that!" There were a good many recently engrossed parchments and writings scattered over the table, and from among them Gammon, after tossing them about for some time, at length drew out a sheet of foolscap. It was stamped, and there was writing upon the first and second pages.

"Now, gentlemen, quick's the word—time's precious!" said Tagrag, taking up a pen, and dipping it into the inkstand. Gammon, with an unconcerned air, placed before him the document he had been looking for. "Ah, how well I know the signature! That flourish of his—a sort of boldness about it, a'n't there?" said Tagrag, observing the signature of Titmouse immediately above the spot on which he was going to place his own; there being written in pencil, underneath, the word "Dreddlington," evidently for the intended signature of the earl. "I'm between two good ones at any rate, eh!" said Tagrag. Gammon or Quirk said something about a "term to attend the inheritance"—"trustee of an outstanding term"—"legal estate vested in the trustees"—"too great power to be put in the hands of any but those of the highest honour."

"Stay!" quoth Gammon, ringing his little handbell—

"nothing like regularity, even in trifles." He was answered by one of the clerks, a very dashing person—"We only wish you to witness a signature," said Gammon. "Now we shall release you, Mr. Tagrag, in a moment. Say, 'I deliver this as my act and deed'—putting your finger on the little wafer there."

So said and so did Mr. Tagrag as he had been directed; the clerk wrote his name under the witnessing clause "Abominable Amminadab;" and from that moment Mr. Tagrag had unconsciously acquired an interest in the future stability of Mr. Titmouse's fortunes, to the extent of some TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS.

"*Now*, gentlemen, you'll make my compliments to his lordship, and if he asks how I came to sign before him, explain the hurry I was in. Time and tide wait for no man. Good morning, gentlemen; good morning; best regards to our friend, Mr. Titmouse." Gammon attended him to the door, cordially shaking him by the hand, and presently returned to the room he had just quitted, where he found Mr. Quirk holding in his hand the document just signed by Tagrag; which was, in fact, a joint and several bond, conditioned in a penalty of forty thousand pounds, for the due repayment, by Titmouse, of twenty thousand pounds and interest, about to be advanced to him on mortgage of a portion of the Yatton property. Gammon sitting down, gently took the instrument from Mr. Quirk, and with a bit of India-rubber calmly effaced the pencilled signature of Dreddlington.

"You're a d——d clever fellow, Gammon!" exclaimed Mr. Quirk, presently, with a sort of sigh. Gammon made no reply. His face was slightly pale, and wore an anxious expression. "It will do *now*," continued Mr. Quirk, rubbing his hands, and with a gleeful expression of countenance.

"That remains to be seen," replied Gammon, in a low tone.

"Eh? What? Does any thing occur—eh? By Jove, no screw loose, I hope?"

"No—but we're in *very deep water* now, Mr. Quirk"—

"Well—devil only cares, so long as *you* keep a sharp look-out, Gammon. I'll trust the helm to you."

As Gammon did not seem in a talkative mood, Quirk shortly afterwards left him.

Now, though Mr. Tagrag is no favourite of mine, I begin to feel a good deal of anxiety on his behalf. I wish he had not been in so vast a "hurry," in a matter which required such grave deliberation, as "signing, sealing, and delivering." When a man is called on to go through so serious a ceremony, it would be well if he could be apprised of the significance of the formula—"*I deliver this as my act and deed.*" Thus hath expressed himself, upon this point, a great authority in the law, old Master Plowden. 'Tis a passage somewhat quaint in form, but not the less forcible and important in substance:—

"Words are oft *spoken* unadvisedly, and pass from men lightly and inconsiderately: but, where the agreement is by *deed*, there is more time for deliberation; for when a man passes a thing by deed, first, there is the determination of the mind to do it, and upon that he causes it to be *written*, which is one part of deliberation; and, afterwards, he *puts his seal to it*, which is another part of deliberation; and, lastly, he *delivers the writing as his deed*, which is the consummation of his resolution. So that there is great deliberation used in the making of deeds, for which reason they are received as a *lien*, final to the party, and are adjudged to bind the party, without examining upon what cause or consideration they were made."*

Possibly some one now reading these pages hath had most dismal experience in the matter above-mentioned; and I hope that such dismal experience, a due reflection will avert from many a reader. As for Tagrag, it may turn out that our fears for him are groundless: nevertheless, *one hates to see men do important things in a hurry*: —and, as we shall not see him again for some time, there can be no harm in wishing him well out of what he has done.

"If 'twere *done* when 'tis done—
Then 'twere well 'twere done *quickly*"—

and not otherwise.

The London season was now advancing towards its close. Fine ladies were getting sated and exhausted with operas, concerts, balls, routs, soirées, assemblies, bazaars, fêtes, and the Park. Their lords were getting tired of

* Plowden's *Commentaries*, 308, a, (Sharrington *v.* Strotton).

their clubs during the day, and hurried dinners, late hours, foul air, long speeches, at the two Houses; where, however they might doze away the time, they could seldom get the luxury of a downright nap for more than an hour or two together—always waking, and fancying themselves in the tower of Babel, and that it was on fire, so strange and startling were the lights and the hubbub! The very whippers-in were looking jaded and done—like a Smithfield drover's dog on a Monday night, that at length can neither bark nor bite in return for a kick or a blow; and, hoarse and wearied, falls asleep on his way home—a regular somnambulist. Where the Earl of Dreddlington and Lady Cecilia were to pass their autumn, was a question which they were beginning to discuss rather anxiously. Any one glancing over their flourishing list of residences in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, which were paraded in the Peerages and Court Guides, would have supposed that they had an ample choice before them: but the reader of this history knows better. The mortifying explanation—mortifying to the poor earl—having been once given by me, I shall not again do so. Suffice it to say, that Poppleton Hall, Hertfordshire, had its disadvantages; there they must keep up a full establishment, and receive county company and other visiters—owing, as they did, much hospitality. 'Twas expensive work, also, at the watering-places; and expensive and also troublesome to go abroad at the earl's advanced period of life. Pensively ruminating on these matters one evening, they were interrupted by a servant bringing in a note, which proved to be from Titmouse—inviting them in terms of profound courtesy and great cordiality, to honour Yatton, by making a stay there during as great a portion of the autumn as they could not better occupy. Mr. Titmouse frankly added, that he could not avoid acknowledging some little degree of selfishness in giving the invitation—namely, in expressing a hope that the earl's presence would afford him, if so disposed, an opportunity of introducing him—Titmouse—to any of the leading members of the county who might be honoured by the earl's acquaintance; that, situated as Titmouse was, he felt an increasing anxiety on that point. He added, that he trusted the Earl and Lady Cecilia would

consider Yatton, while they were there, as in all respects their own residence, and that he, Titmouse, would spare no exertion to render their stay as agreeable as possible. The humble appeal of Titmouse prevailed with his great kinsman, who, on the next day, sent him a letter, saying that his lordship fully recognised the claims which Mr. Titmouse had upon him as the head of the family, and that his lordship should feel very glad in availing himself of the opportunity which offered itself, of placing Mr. Titmouse on a proper footing of intercourse with the people of the county. That, for this purpose, his lordship should decline any invitations they might receive to pass their autumn elsewhere, &c. &c. &c. In plain English, they jumped at the invitation. It had emanated originally from Gammon, who, from motives of his own, had suggested it to Titmouse, bade him act upon it, and drew up the letter conveying it. I say, from motives of his own, Gammon was bent upon becoming personally acquainted with the earl, and fixing himself, if possible, thoroughly in his lordship's confidence. He had contrived to ascertain from Titmouse, without that gentleman's being, however, aware of it, that the few occasions on which his (Gammon's) name had been mentioned by the earl, it had been accompanied by slighting expressions—by indications of dislike and suspicion. Give him, however, thought he, but the opportunity, and he could very soon change the nature of the earl's feelings towards him. As soon, therefore, as the earl's acceptance of the invitation had been communicated to Gammon, he resolved to be one of the guests at Yatton during the time of the earl's stay—a step, into the propriety of which he easily brought Mr. Quirk to enter, but which he did not, for the present, communicate to Titmouse, lest he should, by prematurely disclosing it to the earl, raise any obstacle, arising out of an objection on the part of his lordship, who, if he but found Gammon actually *there*, must submit to the infliction with what grace he might. In due time it was notified on the part of the earl, by his man of business, to Mr. Titmouse, (who had gone down to Yatton,) through *his* man of business, that the earl, and a formidable portion of his establishment, would make their appearance at Yatton by a named day. The earl had chosen to extend the invitation to Miss Mac-

spleuchan, and also to as many attendants as he thought fit to take with him, instead of letting them consume their broad-wages in entire idleness in town or at Poppleton. Heavens! what accommodation was required, for the earl, for the Lady Cecilia, each of their personal attendants, Miss Macspleuchan, and five servants! Then there were two other guests invited, in order to form company and amusement for the earl—the Marquis Gants-Jaunes de Millefleurs and a Mr. Tuft. Accommodation must be had for these; and to secure it, Mr. Titmouse and Mr. Gammon were driven to almost the extremities of the house. Four servants, in a sort of baggage-wagon, preceded the arrival of the earl and Lady Cecilia by a day or two, in order to "arrange every thing;" and, somehow or another, one of the first things that was done with this view, was to install his lordship's chief servants in the quarters of Mr. Titmouse's servants, who, it was suggested, should endeavour to make themselves as comfortable as they could in some little unfurnished rooms over the stables!

And, in a word, before Mr. Titmouse's grand guests had been at the hall four-and-twenty hours, there was established there the same freezing state and solemn ceremony which prevailed in the earl's own establishment. Down came at length, thundering through the village, the earl's dusty travelling-carriage and four; himself, Lady Cecilia, and Miss Macspleuchan, within, his valet and Lady Cecilia's maid behind: presently it wound round the park road, crashing and flashing through the gravel, and rattling under the old gateway, and at length stood before the hall door—the reeking horses pulled up with a sudden jerk, which almost threw them upon their haunches. Mr. Titmouse was in readiness to receive his distinguished visiters; the carriage-door was opened—down went the steps—and in a few moments' time the proud old Earl of Dreddlington and his proud daughter, having entered the hall, had become the guests of its flustered and ambitious little proprietor. While all the guests are occupied in their dressing-rooms, recovering themselves from the cramp and fatigue of a long journey, and are preparing to make their appearance at dinner, let me take the opportunity to give you a sketch of the only one of the guests

to whom you are at present a stranger: I mean Mr. Tuft —Mr. Venom Tuft.

Oft hath an inexperienced mushroom-hunter, deceived at a distance, run up to gather what seemed to be a fine cluster of mushrooms, growing under the shade of a stately tree, but which, on stooping down to gather them, he discovers with disappointment and disgust to be no mushrooms at all, but vile, unwholesome—even poisonous funguses, which, to prevent their similarly deluding others, he kicks up and crushes under foot. And is not this a type of what often happens in society? Under the "cold shade of aristocracy," how often is to be met with—the sycophant?—Mr. Venom Tuft was one of them. His character was written in his face. Disagreeable to look at—though *he* thought far otherwise—he yet contrived to make himself pleasant to be listened to, by the languid and ennuyéed fashionable. He spoke ever—

"In a *toady's* key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness."

His person was at once effeminate and coarse; his gesture and address were cringing—there was an intolerable calmness and gentleness about them at all times, but especially while labouring in his vocation. He had the art of administering delicate and appropriate flattery by a look only, deferential and insinuating—as well as by words. He had always at command a copious store of gossip, highly seasoned with scandal; which he collected and prepared with industry and judgment. Clever toadies are generally bitter ones. With sense enough to perceive, but not spir enough to abandon their odious propensities, they are aware of the ignominious spectacle they exhibit before the eyes of men of the least degree of independence and discernment, and whose open contempt they have not power or manliness enough to resent. Then their smothered rage takes an inward turn; it tends to, and centres in the tongue, from which it falls in drops of scalding virus; and thus it is, that the functions of sycophant and slanderer are so often found united in the same miserable individual. Does a sycophant fancy that his patron—if one may use such a term—is not aware of his character and position? Would that he could but hear himself spoken of by those

to whom he has been *cottoning!* If he could but for one moment "see himself as others see him"—surely he would instantly wriggle out of the sight of man! But Mr. Tuft was not an every-day toady. Being a clever man, it occurred to him as calculated infinitely to enhance the value of his attentions, if he could get them to be regarded as those of a man of some ability and reputation. So reasonable a wish, as thus to rise to eminence in the calling in life to which he had devoted himself—viz. toadyism—stimulated him to considerable exertion, which was in time rewarded by a measure of success; for he began to be looked on as *something* of a literary man. Then he would spend his mornings in reading up, in those quarters whence he might cull materials for display in society, at a later period of the day, when he could watch his opportunity, or, if none presented itself, make one, by diverting the current of conversation into the channel on which was the gay and varied bordering of his recent acquisitions.

All his knowledge was of this gossipping *pro hâc vice* character. He was very skilful in administering his flattery. Did he dine with his grace, or his lordship, whose speech in the House appeared in that or the preceding day's newspapers? Mr. Tuft got it up carefully, and also the speech in answer to it, with a double view—to show himself at home in the question; and then to differ a litlle with his grace or his lordship, in order to be presently set right by them, and convinced by them! Or when conversation turned upon the topics which had, overnight, called up his grace or his lordship on his legs, Mr. Tuft would break in by observing that such and such a point had been "put in the debate with admirable point and force by *some one* of the speakers—he did not recollect whom;" and on being apprised, and receiving a courteous bow from the great man entitled to the undesigned compliment, look *so* surprised—almost, indeed, piqued! Carefully, however, as he managed matters, he was soon found out by *men*, and compelled to betake himself, with tenfold ardour, to the women, with whom he lasted a little longer. *They* considered him a great literary man; for he could quote and criticise a great deal of poetry, and a good many novels. He could show that

what every body else admired was full of faults; what all condemned was admirable: so that the fair creatures were forced to distrust their own judgment in proportion as they deferred to his. He would allow no one to be entitled to the praise of literary excellence except individuals of rank, and one or two men of established literary reputation, who had not thought it worth their while to repel his obsequious advances, or convenient not to do so. Then he would polish the poetry of fine ladies, touch up their little tales, and secure their insertion in fashionable periodicals. On these accounts, and of his piquant tittle-tattle, no soirée or conversazione was complete without him, any more than without tea, coffee, ice, or lemonade. All toadies hate one another; but his brethren both hated and feared Mr. Tuft; for he was not only so successful himself, but possessed and used such engines for *depressing them.*

Mr. Tuft had hoped to succeed in being popped in by one of his patrons for a snug little Whig borough, (for Tuft happened to be a Whig—though, for that matter, he might have been, more advantageously, a Tory;) but the great man got tired of him, and turned him off, though the ladies of the family still secured him access to the dinner table. He did not, however, make a very grateful return for such good-natured condescensions. Ugly and ungainly as he was, he yet imagined himself possessed of personal attractions for the ladies, and converted their innocent and unsuspecting familiarities, which had emanated from those confident in their purity and their greatness, into tokens of the ascendency he had gained over them; and of which, with equal cruelty, folly, and presumption, he could afterwards boast pretty freely. Till this came, however, to be suspected and discovered, Mr. Tuft visited a good many leading houses in town, and spent no inconsiderable portion of each autumn at some one or other of the country mansions of his patrons—from whose "castles," "halls," "abbeys," "priories," and "seats," he took great pride in dating his letters to his friends. I must not forget to mention that he kept a book, very gorgeously bound and embellished, with silver-gilt clasps, and bearing on the back the words—"Book

of Autographs ;" but I should have written it—"Trophies of Toadyism." This book contained autograph notes of the leading nobility, addressed familiarly to himself—thus :—

"The Duke of Walworth presents his compliments to Mr. Tuft, and felt particularly obliged by," &c.

"The Duchess of Diamond hopes Mr. Tuft will not forget to bring with him this evening," &c.

"The Marquis of M—— has the honour to assure Mr. Tuft that," &c.

"Dear Tuft,

"Why were you not at —— House last night? We were dreadfully dull without you! X—— so stupid"—

This was from a very pretty and fashionable countess, whose initials it bore.

"If Mr. Tuft is dead, Lady Dulcimer requests to be informed when his funeral will take place, as she, together with a host of mourners, intend to show him a last mark of their respect."

"Dear Tuft,

"The poodle you brought me has got the mange, or some horrid complaint or other, which is making all his hair fall off. Do come and tell me what is to be done. Where can I send the sweet suffering angel?—Yours,

"Arabella D——."

This was from the eldest and loveliest daughter of a very great duke.

"The Lord Chancellor presents his compliments, and begs to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Venom Tuft's obliging present of his little '*Essay on Greatness.*'"

These are samples, taken at random, of the contents of Mr. Tufts book of autographs, evidencing abundantly the

satisfactory terms of intimacy upon which he lived with the great; and it was ecstasy to him, to see this glittering record of his triumphs glanced over by the envious admiring eyes of those in his own station in society. How he delighted to be asked about the sayings and doings of the exclusive circles! How confidentially could he intimate the desperate condition of a sick peer—an expected *éclaircissement* of some fashionable folly and crime—or a move to be made in the House that evening: poor Tuft little suspecting (lying so snug in his shell of self-conceit) how frequently he fell, on these occasions, among the Philistines—and was, unconsciously to himself, being trotted out by a calm sarcastic hypocrite, for the amusement of the standers-by, just as a little monkey is poked with a stick to get up and exhibit himself and his tricks. Such was Mr. Tuft, a great friend and admirer of "the marquis," through whose influence he had procured the invitation from Titmouse, in virtue of which he was now dressing in a nice little room at the back of the Hall, overlooking the stables; being bent upon improving his already tolerably familiar acquaintance with the Earl of Dreddlington and Lady Cecilia, and also extracting from the man whose hospitality he was enjoying, materials for merriment among his great friends against the next season.

CHAPTER II.

When the party had collected in the drawing room, in readiness for dinner, you might have seen Mr. Tuft in earnest conversation with the Lady Cecilia; Mr. Gammon standing talking to Miss Macspleuchan, with an air of courteous ease and frankness—having observed her sitting neglected by every body; the earl conversing now with the marquis, then with Titmouse, and anon with Tuft, with whom he appeared to be particularly pleased. Happening at length to be standing near Gammon—a calm, gentlemanlike person, of whom he knew nothing, nor suspected that his keen eye had taken in his lordship's true character and capacity at a glance; that he would, in a few hours' time, acquire as complete a mastery over his said lordship, as ever the present famous *hippodromist* at Windsor, by touching a nerve in the mouth of a horse, reduces him to helpless docility and submission—the Earl and he fell into casual conversation for a moment or two. The air of deference with which Gammon received the slight advances of the great man, was exquisite and indescribable. It gave him clearly to understand that his lofty pretensions were known to, and profoundly appreciated by the individual he was addressing. Gammon said but little; that little, however, how significant and decisive! He knew that the earl would presently inquire of Titmouse who the unknown visiter was; and that on being told in the conceited and probably disparaging manner which Gammon knew Titmouse would adopt, if he supposed it would please the earl, that "it was only Mr. Gammon, one of his solicitors," he would sink at once and for ever beneath the notice of the earl. He resolved, therefore, to anticipate—to contrive that it should ooze out easily and advantageously from himself, so that he could

see the effect it had upon the earl, and regulate his movements accordingly. Gammon sate down before the fortress of the earl's pride, resolved that, for all it appeared so inaccessible and impregnable, it should fall, however his skill and patience might be taxed in the siege. Till he had cast his piercing eye upon the earl, Gammon had felt a little of the nervousness which one may imagine would be experienced by Van Amburgh, who, on being summoned into the presence of majesty to give a specimen of his skill upon an animal concealed from him—of whose name and qualities he was ignorant—should summon all his terrors into his eye, and string his muscles to their highest tension: and, on the door being opened, turn with smiling scorn—if not indignation—from a sucking pig, a calf, an ass, or a chicken.

Something similar were the feelings experienced by Gammon, as soon as he had scanned the countenance and figure of the Earl of Dreddlington. He quickly perceived that the dash of awe which he had thrown into his manner, was producing its due effect upon that most magnificent simpleton. Watching his opportunity, he gently introduced the topic of the recent change of ownership which Yatton had undergone; and in speaking of the manner in which Mr. Titmouse had borne his sudden prosperity—"Yes, my lord," continued Gammon, with apparent carelessness, "I recollect making some such observation to him, and he replied, 'very true, *Mr. Gammon.*'" Gammon finished his sentence calmly; but he perceived that the earl had instantly withdrawn himself into his earldom. He had given a very slight start; a very little colour had mounted into his cheek; a sensible hauteur had been assumed; and by the time that Gammon had done speaking, the space between them had been—as Lord Dreddlington imagined, unobservedly—increased by two or three inches. Gammon was a man—an able and a proud man—and he felt galled; but, "let it pass," he presently reflected—"let it pass, you pompous old idiot; I will one day repay it with interest." The earl separated from him, Gammon regarding him as a gaudy craft sheering off for a while, but doomed to be soon sunk. Mr. Tuft, (who was the son of a highly respectable retired

tobacconist in the north,) having ascertained that Gammon was only Mr. Titmouse's attorney, conducted himself for a while as though there were no such person in the room; but being a quick observer, and catching once or twice the faint sarcastic smile with which Mr. Gammon's eye was settled on him, he experienced a very galling and uneasy consciousness of his presence. The marquis's superior tact and perception of character led him to treat Gammon very differently—with a deference and anxiety to please him, which Gammon understood thoroughly—in fact, he and the marquis had many qualities in common, but Gammon was the man of *power*. During dinner he sate beside Miss Macspleuchan, and was almost the only person who spoke to her—in fact, he said but little to any one else. He took wine with Titmouse with a marked but guarded air of *confidence*. The marquis took wine with Gammon with an air of studied courtesy. The earl's attention was almost entirely engrossed by Mr. Tuft, who sate next to him, chattering in his ear like a little magpie perched upon his shoulder. The marquis sate next to the Lady Cecilia; for whose amusement, as far as his cautious tact would allow him, he from time to time drew out their little host At length, in answer to a question by the marquis, the earl let fall some pompous observation, which the marquis, who was getting very tired of the vapid monotony which pervaded the table, ventured to differ from pretty decisively. Tuft instantly sided with the earl, and spoke with infinite fluency for some minutes: Gammon saw in a moment that he was an absurd pretender; and watching his opportunity, for the first time that he had interchanged a syllable with him, with one word exposing a palpable historical blunder of poor Tuft's, overthrew him as completely as a bullet from a crossbow dislodges a tomtit from the wall on which he is hopping about, unconscious of his danger. 'Twas a thing that there could be no mistake about whatever.

"That's a *settler*, Tuft," said the marquis, after a pause: Tuft gulped down a glass of wine: and presently, with the slightly staggered earl, became a silent listener to the discussion into which the marquis and Gammon had entered. Obtuse as was the earl, Gammon contrived to let him see

how effectually he was supporting his lordship's opinion, which Mr. Tuft had so ridiculously failed in. The marquis got slightly the worst of the encounter with Gammon, whose object he saw, and whose tact he admired; and with much judgment permitted Gammon to appear to the earl as his successful defender, in order that he might himself make a friend of Gammon. Moreover, he was not at all annoyed at witnessing the complete and unexpected discomfiture of poor Tuft, whom, for all his intimacy with that gentleman, the marquis thoroughly despised.

However it might possibly be that his grand guests enjoyed themselves, it was far otherwise with Mr. Titmouse; who, being compelled to keep sober, was quite miserable. None of those around him were drinking men:—and the consequence was, that he would retire early to his bedroom, and amuse himself with brandy and water, and cigars, while his guests amused themselves with cards, billiards, or otherwise as best they might. He did, indeed, "stand like a cipher in the great account;" instead of feeling himself the Earl of Dreddlington's host, he felt himself as one of his lordship's guests, struggling in vain against the freezing state and etiquette which the earl carried with him wherever he went, like a sort of atmosphere. In this extremity he secretly clung to Gammon, and reposed upon his powerful support and sympathy more implicitly than ever he had done before. As the shooting season had commenced, and game was plentiful at Yatton, the marquis and Tuft found full occupation during the day, as occasionally did Mr. Gammon. Mr. Titmouse once accompanied them; but having contrived once or twice very nearly to blow his own hand off, and also to blow out the eyes of the marquis, they intimated that he had better go out alone for the future—as he did once or twice, but soon got tired of such solitary sport. Besides —hares, pheasants, partridges—old and young, cock or hen—'twas all one—none of them seemed to care one straw for him or his gun, let him pop and blaze away as loud and as long, as near or as far off, as he liked. The only thing he hit—and that plump—was one of his unfortunate dogs, which he killed on the spot; and then coming up with it, stamped upon the poor creature's bleeding car-

cass, saying with a furious oath—"Why didn't you keep out of the way, you brute?"

The earl was really anxious to perform his promise of introducing, or procuring Titmouse to be introduced, to the leading nobility and gentry of the country; but it proved a more difficult task than his lordship had anticipated—for Titmouse's early doings at Yatton had not yet been forgotten: some of the haughty whig gentry joined with their tory neighbours in manifesting their open contempt, and dislike, for one who could so disgrace the name and station to which he had been elevated in the county; and the earl had to encounter one or two somewhat mortifying rebuffs, in the course of the efforts which he was making for the establishment of his young kinsman.

There were some, however, whom mere political considerations—some whom deference for the earl's rank, and unwillingness to hurt his feelings, and others from considerations of political interest—induced to receive the new squire of Yatton on a footing of formal intimacy and equality; so that his lordship's numerous drives were not entirely useless. The whole party at the Hall attended the earl to church on the Sundays—entirely filling the squire's pew and the adjoining one; this decorous conduct presenting a very edifying spectacle to the humble congregation, and suggesting a striking contrast between the present and the former visiters at the Hall. Worthy Doctor Tatham was asked several times to dinner, at the earl's instance, who treated him on such occasions with great though stately courtesy. The only persons with whom the little doctor felt at his ease, were Mr. Gammon and Miss Macspleuchan, who treated him with the utmost cordiality and respect. What became during the day of the two ladies, I hardly know. There was no instrument at Yatton: bagatelle-board, and novels from a circulating library at York, frequent rides and drives through the grounds and about the country, and occasional visits to and from one or two families with whom Lady Cecilia had a town acquaintance, occupied their day; and in the evening, a rubber at whist, or cribbage, or ecarté, with the earl—sometimes, too, with the marquis and Mr. Tuft, both of whom lost no opportunity of paying marked atten-

tion to Lady Cecilia, with a view of dissipating as far as possible the inevitable ennui of her situation—would while away the short evenings, very early hours being now kept at the Hall. 'Twas wonderful that two such men as the marquis and Mr. Tuft could stay so long as they did at so very dull a place, and with such dull people. Inwardly, they both voted the earl an insufferable old twaddler; his daughter a piece of languid insipidity; and one would have thought it daily more irksome for them to keep up their courtly attentions. They had, however, as may presently be seen, their objects in view.

As Gammon, a little to the earl's surprise, continued apparently a permanent guest at the Hall, where he seemed ever engaged in superintending and getting into order the important affairs of Mr. Titmouse, it could hardly be but that he and the earl should be occasionally thrown together; for as the earl did not shoot and never read books, even had there been any to read, he had little to do when not engaged upon the expeditions I have alluded to, but saunter about the house and grounds, and enter into conversation with almost any one he met. The assistance which Gammon had rendered the earl on the occasion of their first meeting at dinner, had not been forgotten by his lordship, but had served to take off the edge from his preconceived contemptuous dislike for him. Gammon steadily kept in the back-ground, resolved that all advances should come from the earl. When, once or twice, his lordship inquired, with what Gammon saw to be only an affected carelessness, into the state of Mr. Titmouse's affairs, Mr. Gammon evinced a courteous readiness to give him *general* information; but with an evident caution and anxiety not unduly to expose, even to the earl, Mr. Titmouse's distinguished kinsman, the state of his property. He would, however, disclose sufficient to satisfy the earl of Mr. Gammon's zeal and ability on behalf of Mr. Titmouse's interests, his consummate qualifications as a man of business; and from time to time perceived that his display was not lost upon the earl. Mr. Gammon's anxiety, in particular, to prevent the borough of Yatton from being a second time wrested out of the hands of its proprietor, and returning, by a corrupt and profligate arrangement with ministers, a Tory to Parliament, gave

the earl peculiar satisfaction. He was led into a long conversation with Mr. Gammon upon political matters; and, at its close, was greatly struck with the soundness of his views, the strength of his liberal principles, and the vigour and acuteness with which he had throughout agreed with every thing the earl had said, and fortified every position he had taken; evincing, at the same time, a profound appreciation of his lordship's luminous exposition of political principles. The earl was forced to own to himself, that he had never before met with a man of Mr. Gammon's strength of intellect, whose views and opinions had so intimately and entirely coincided—were, indeed, identical with his own. 'Twas delightful to listen to them upon these occasions—to observe the air of reverence and admiration with which Gammon listened to the lessons of political wisdom that fell, with increasing length and frequency, from the lips of his lordship.

"Του και απο γλωσσης μελιτος γλυκιων ρεεν αυδη."

Nor was it only when they were alone together, that Gammon would thus sit at the feet of Gamaliel: he was not ashamed to do so openly at the dinner-table; but, ah! how delicately and dexterously did he conceal from the spectators the game he was playing—more difficult to do so though it daily became—because the more willing Gammon was to receive, the more eager the earl was to communicate instruction! If, on any of these occasions, oppressed by the multifariousness of his knowledge, and its sudden overpowering confluence, he would pause in the midst of a series of half-formed sentences, Gammon would be at hand, to glide in easily and finish what the earl had begun, out of the earl's own ample materials, of which Gammon had caught a glimpse, and only worked out the earl's own, somewhat numerous, half-formed illustrations. The marquis and Mr. Tuft began, however, at length to feel a little impatient at observing the way Gammon was making with the earl: but of what use was it for them to interfere! Gammon was an exceedingly awkward person to meddle with; for having once got fair play, by gaining the earl's ear, his accuracy, readiness, extent of information

upon political topics, and admirable temper, told very powerfully against his two opponents, who at length interfered less and less with him; the marquis only *feeling* pique, but Tuft also *showing* it. Had it been otherwise, indeed, it would have been odd; for Gammon seemed to feel a peculiar pleasure in demolishing him.

The marquis, however, once resolved to show Gammon how distinctly he perceived his plan of operations, by waiting till he and the poor earl had reached a climax of absurdity, and then, with his eye on Gammon, bursting into laughter. Seldom had Gammon been more ruffled than by that well-timed laugh; for he felt *found out!* When the earl and he were alone, he would listen with lively interest, over and over again, never wearied, to the earl's magnificent accounts of what he had intended to do, had he only continued in office, in the important department over which he had presided, viz. the Board of Green Cloth; and more than once put his lordship into a soft flutter of excitement, by hinting at rumours which, he said, were rife—that, in the event of a change of ministers, which was looked for, his lordship was to be President of the Council. "Sir," the earl would say, "I should not shrink from the performance of my duty to my sovereign, to whatever post he might be pleased to call me. The one you mention, sir, has its peculiar difficulties, and if I know any thing of myself, sir, it is one for which—I should say, I am peculiarly qualified. Sir, the duty of presiding over the deliberations of powerful minds, requires signal discretion and dignity, because, in short, especially in affairs of state—Do you comprehend me, Mr. Gammon?"

"I understand your lordship to say, that where the occasion is one of such magnitude, and the disturbing forces are upon so vast a scale, to moderate and guide conflicting interests and opinions"——

"Sir, it *is* so; *tantes componere lites, hic labor, hoc opus*," interrupted the earl, with a desperate attempt to fish up a fragment or two of his early scholarship; and his features wore for a moment a solemn commanding expression, which satisfied Gammon of the sway which his lordship would have had when presiding at the council-board.

Gammon would also occasionally introduce the subject of heraldry, asking questions concerning that science, and also concerning the genealogies of leading members of the peerage, with which he safely presumed that the earl would be, as also he proved, perfectly familiar; and his lordship would go on for an hour at once upon these interesting and vividly-exciting subjects.

Shortly after luncheon one day, of which only Gammon, the earl, and the two ladies, were in the hall to partake, Mr. Gammon had occasion to enter the drawing-room, where he found the earl sitting upon the sofa, with his heavy gold spectacles on, leaning over the table, engaged in the perusal of a portion of a work then in course of periodical publication, which had only that day been delivered at the Hall. The earl asked Gammon if he had seen it, and was answered in the negative.

"Sir," said the earl, rising and removing his glasses, "it is a remarkably interesting publication, showing considerable knowledge of a very difficult and all-important subject, and one, in respect of which the lower orders of the people—nay, I lament to be obliged to add, the great bulk of the middle classes also, are wofully deficient—I mean heraldry, and the history of the origin, progress, and present state of the families of the old nobility and gentry of this country." The work which had been so fortunate as thus to meet with the approbation of the earl, was the last monthly number of a History of the County of York, and of which work, as yet, only thirty-eight seven-and-sixpenny quarto numbers had made their appearance. 'Twas an admirable work, every number of which had contained a glorification of some different Yorkshire family. The discriminating patronage of Mr. Titmouse for this inestimable performance, had been secured by a most obsequious letter from the learned editor—but more especially by a device of his in the last number, which it would have been strange indeed if it could have failed to catch the eye, and interest the feelings of the new aristocratical owner of Yatton. Opposite to an engraving of the Hall, was placed a magnificent genealogical tree, surmounted by a many-quartered shield of armorial bearings, both of which purported to be an accurate

record of the ancestral glories of the house of "TITMOUSE of YATTON!"

A minute investigation might indeed have detected that the recent flight of *Titmice*, which were perched on the lower branches of this imposing pedigree, bore nearly as small a proportion to the long array of chivalrous Drelincourts and Dreddlingtons which constituted the massy trunk, as did the paternal coat* (to which the profound research and ingenuity of Sir GORGEOUS TINTACK, the -—— king-at-arms, had succeeded in demonstrating the inalienable right of Tittlebat) to the interminable series of quarterings derived from the same source, which occupied the remainder of the escocheon. At these mysteriously significant symbols, however, Mr. Titmouse, though willing to believe that they indicated some just cause or other of family pride, had looked with the same appreciating intelligence which you may fancy you see a chicken displaying, while hesitatingly clapping its foot upon, and quaintly cocking its eye at, a slip of paper lying in a yard, covered over with algebraic characters and calculations. Far otherwise, however, was it with the earl, in whose eyes the complex and recondite character of the production infinitely enhanced its value, and struck in his bosom several deep chords of genealogical feeling, as he proceeded, in answer to various anxious inquiries of Gammon, to give him a very full and minute account of the unrivalled splendour and antiquity of his lordship's ancestry. Now Gammon—while prosecuting the researches which had preceded the elevation of Mr. Titmouse to that rank and fortune of which the united voice of the fashionable world had now pronounced him so eminently worthy —had made himself pretty well acquainted with the previous history and connexions of that ancient and illustrious house, of which the Earl of Dreddlington was the head;

* Per bend Ermine and Pean, two lions rampant combatant, counterchanged; armed and languid Gules, surmounted by three bendlets undee Argent, on each three fleurs-de-lis Azure; on a chief Or, three TITMICE volant proper, all within a bordure gobonated Argent and Sable.

CREST.—On a cap of maintenance a Titmouse statant proper, ducally gorged Or, holding in his beak a woodlouse embewed Azure.

and his familiarity with this topic, though it did not *surprise* the earl, because he conceived it to be every one's duty to acquaint himself with such momentous matters, rapidly raised him in the good opinion of the earl, to whom, at length, it occurred to view him in quite a new light; viz. as the chosen instrument by whose means (under Providence) the perverse and self-willed Aubrey had been righteously cast down from that high place which his rebellious opposition to the wishes and political views of his liege lord, had rendered him unworthy to occupy; while a more loyal branch had been raised from obscurity to his forfeited rank and estates. In fact, the earl began to look upon Gammon as one whose just regard for his lordship's transcendent position in the aristocracy of England, had led him even to anticipate his lordship's possible wishes; and proceeded accordingly to rivet this spontaneous allegiance, by discoursing with the most condescending affability on the successive noble and princely alliances which had, during a long series of generations, refined the ancient blood of the Drelincourts into the sort of super-sublimated ichor which at present flowed in his own veins. Mr. Gammon marked the progress of the earl's feelings with the greatest interest, perceiving the increasing extent to which respect for him—Gammon—was mingling with his sublime self-satisfaction; and, watching his opportunity, struck a spark into the dry tinder of his vain imagination—blew it gently—and saw that it caught, and spread. Confident in his knowledge of the state of the earl's feelings, and that his lordship had reached the highest point of credulity, Gammon intimated, in a hesitating but yet impressive manner, his impression that the recent failure in the male line of the princely house of HOCH-STIFFELHAUSEN NARRENSTEIN DUMERLEINBERG* had placed his lordship, in right of the marriage of one of his ancestors, during the thirty years' war, with a princess of that august line, in a situation to claim, if such were his lordship's pleasure, the dormant honours and sovereign rank attached to the pos-

* I vehemently suspect myself guilty of a slight anachronism here; this ancient and illustrious monarchy having been mediatized by the Congress of Vienna in 1815—its territories now forming part of the parish of Hahn-roost, in the kingdom of ——.

session of that important principality. The earl appeared for a few moments transfixed with awe.

The bare possibility of such an event seemed too much for him to realize; but when further conversation with Gammon had familiarized his lordship with the notion, his mind's eye glanced to his old rival, the Earl of Fitzwarren: what would *he* say to all this? How would his little honours pale beside the splendours of his Serene Highness the Prince of Hoch-Stiffelhausen Nairenstein Dumerleinberg! He was not sorry when Mr. Gammon soon afterwards left him to follow out, unrestrained by the swelling current of his thoughts, and yield himself up to, the transporting ecstasies of anticipated sovereignty. To such a pitch did his excitement carry him, that he might shortly afterwards have been seen walking up and down the Elm Avenue, with the feelings and the air of an old KING.

Not satisfied, however, with the success of his daring experiment upon the credulity and inflammable imagination of the aspiring old nobleman—whom his suggestion had set upon instituting extensive inquiries into the position of his family with reference to the foreign alliances which it had formed in times past, and of which so dazzling an incident might really be in existence—it occurred to Mr. Gammon, on another occasion of his being left alone with the earl, and who he saw was growing manifestly more pleased with the frequent recurrence of them, to sink a shaft into a new mine. He, therefore, on mere speculation, introduced, as a subject of casual conversation, the imprudence of persons of rank and large fortune devolving the management of their pecuniary affairs so entirely upon others—and thus leaving themselves exposed to all the serious consequences of employing incompetent, indolent, or mercenary agents. Mr. Gammon proceeded to observe that he had recently known an instance of a distinguished nobleman, (whose name he for very obvious reasons suppressed,) who, having occasion to raise a large sum of money by way of mortgage, left the sole negotiation of the affair to an agent, who was afterwards proved to have been in league with the lender, (the mortgagee,) and permitted his employer to pay, for ten or twelve years,

an excess of interest over what he might, with a little exertion, have obtained money for, which actually made a difference in his income of a thousand a-year.

Here, looking out of the northeast corner of his eye, the placid speaker, continuing unmoved, observed the earl start a little glance somewhat anxiously at him, but in silence, and slightly quicken the pace at which he had been walking. Gammon presently added, in a careless sort of way, that accident had brought him into professional intercourse with that nobleman—Oh Gammon! Gammon!—whom he was ultimately instrumental in saving from the annual robbery that was being inflicted upon him. It was enough; Gammon saw that what he had been saying had sunk like lead into the mind of his companion, who, for the rest of the day, seemed burdened and oppressed with it—or some other cause of anxiety; and, from an occasional uneasy and wistful eye which the earl fixed upon him at dinner, he felt conscious that not long would elapse, before he should hear something from the earl connected with the topic in question—and he was not mistaken. The very next day they met in the park; and, after one or two casual observations, the earl remarked that by the way, with reference to their yesterday's conversation, it "*did so happen*,"—very singularly—that the earl had a friend who was placed in a situation very similar to that which had been mentioned by Mr. Gammon to the earl; a very intimate friend—and the earl would like to hear what was Mr. Gammon's opinion of the case. Gammon was scarcely able to refrain from a smile, as the earl went on, evincing every moment a more vivid interest in behalf of his mysterious friend, who at last stood suddenly confessed as the Earl of Dreddlington; for, in answer to a queston of Mr. Gammon, his lordship unwittingly spoke in the first person. On perceiving this, he got much confused, but Gammon passed it off very easily; and by his earnest, confidential tone and manner, soon soothed and reconciled the earl to the vexatious disclosure he had made—vexatious only because the earl had thought fit, so very unnecessarily, to make a mystery of an everyday matter.

He rather loftily enjoined Mr. Gammon to secrecy upon the subject, to which Gammon readily pledged himself,

and then they entered upon an unrestrained discussion of the matter. Suffice it to say, that in the end Gammon assured the earl that he would without any difficulty undertake to procure a transfer of the mortgage at present existing on his lordship's property, which should lower his annual payments by at least one-and-a-half per cent; and which, on a rough calculation, would make a difference of very nearly five hundred a-year in the earl's favour! But Gammon explicitly informed the earl, that he was not to suppose that his interests had been in any way neglected, or he overreached, in the original transaction; that it had been conducted on his lordship's behalf, by his solicitor, Mr. Pounce, one of the most respectable men in the profession; and that a few years made all the difference in matters of this description; and before he, Mr. Gammon, would interfere any further in the business, he requested his lordship to write to Mr. Pounce, enclosing a draft of the arrangement proposed by Mr. Gammon, and desiring Mr. Pounce to say what he thought of it. This the earl did; and in a few days' time received an answer from Mr. Pounce, to the effect that he was happy that there was a prospect of so favourable an arrangement as that proposed, to which he could see no objection whatever; and would co-operate with Mr. Gammon in any way, and at any time, which his lordship might point out. Mr. Gammon was, in fact, rendering here a real and very important service to the earl; being an able, acute, and energetic man of business—while Mr. Pounce was very nearly superannuated,—had grown rich and indolent, no longer attending to business with his pristine energy, but *pottering* and dozing over it, as it were, from day to day; unable, from his antiquated style of doing business, and the constantly narrowing circle of his connexions, to avail himself of those resources which were open to younger and more energetic practitioners, with more varied resources.

Thus, though money was now much more plentiful, and consequently to be got for a less sum than when, some ten years before, the earl had been compelled to borrow a large sum upon mortgage, old Mr. Pounce had suffered matters to remain all the while as they were,

and so they would have remained all the while as they were, but for Gammon's accidental interference; for the earl was not a man of business—could not bear to talk to any one about the fact of his property being mortgaged—did not like even to think of it; and concluded that good old Mr. Pounce kept a sufficiently sharp eye upon his noble client's interest. The earl gave Mr. Pounce's letter to Mr. Gammon, and requested him to lose no time in putting himself into communication with Mr. Pounce, for the purpose of effecting the suggested transfer. This Gammon undertook to do; and perceiving that he had fortunately made so strong a lodgment in the earl's good opinion, whose interests now bound him, in a measure, to Mr. Gammon, he thought that he might safely quit Yatton and return to town, in order to attend to divers matters of pressing exigency. Before his departure, however, he had a very long interview with Titmouse, in the course of which he gave that now submissive personage a few simple, perspicuous, and decisive directions, as to the line of conduct he was to pursue, which alone could conduce to his permanent interests, and which he enjoined him to pursue, on terror of the consequences of failing to do so.

The Earl of Dreddlington, in taking leave of Mr. Gammon, evinced the utmost degree of cordiality that was consistent with the stateliness of his demeanour. He felt real regret at parting with a man of such superior intellect, such a fascinating deference towards himself, (the earl,) and it glanced across his mind, that he would be the very fittest man that could be thought of, in respect of tact, energy, and knowledge, to become prime minister to—his Serene Highness the Prince of Hoch-Stiffelhausen Narrenstein Dumerleinberg!

The longer that the earl continued at Yatton—in which he could not have more thoroughly established himself if he had in the ordinary way engaged it for the autumn—the more he was struck with its beauties; and the oftener they presented themselves to his mind's eye, the more vivid and powerful became his regrets at the splitting of the family interests which had so long existed, and his desire to take advantage of what seemed almost an op-

portunity specially afforded by Providence for re-uniting them.

As the earl took his solitary walks, he thought with deep anxiety of his own advanced age, and sensibly increasing feebleness. The position of his affairs was not satisfactory. Then he left behind him an only child—and that a daughter—on whom would devolve the splendid responsibility of sustaining, alone, the honours of her ancient family. Then there was his newly discovered kinsman, Mr. Titmouse, sole and unembarrassed proprietor of this fine old family property; simple-minded, and confiding, with a truly reverential feeling towards them, the heads of the family; also the undoubted, undisputed proprietor of the borough of Yatton; who entertained and avowed the same liberal and enlightened political opinions, which the earl had ever maintained with dignified consistency and determination; and who, by a rare conjunction of personal merit, and of circumstance, had been elevated to the highest pitch of popularity in the highest regions of society; and who was, moreover, already next in succession, after himself and the Lady Cecilia, to the ancient barony of Drelincourt and the estates annexed to it. How little was there, in reality, to set against all this? An eccentricity of manner, for which nature only, if any one, was to blame; a tendency to extreme modishness in dress, and a slight deficiency in the knowledge of the etiquette of society—but which daily experience and intercourse were rapidly supplying; and a slight disposition towards the pleasures of the table, which no doubt would disappear on the instant of his having an object of permanent and elevating attachment. Such was Titmouse. He had as yet, undoubtedly, made no advances to Lady Cecilia, nor evinced any disposition to do so; numerous and favourable had been, and continued to be, the opportunities for his doing so. Might not this, however, be set down entirely to the score of his excessive diffidence—distrust of his pretensions to aspire after so august an alliance as with the Lady Cecilia?—Yet there certainly was another way of accounting for his conduct: had he got already entangled with an attachment elsewhere?—Run after in society, as he had been, in a

manner totally unprecedented during his very first season—had his affections been enveigled?

When the earl dwelt upon this dismal possibility, if it were when he was lying awake in bed, he would be seized with a fit of intolerable restlessness,—and getting up, wrap himself in his dressing-gown, and pace his chamber for an hour together, running over, in his mind, the names of all the women he knew who would be likely to lay snares for Titmouse, in order to secure him for a daughter. Then there was the Lady Cecilia—but she, he knew, would not run counter to his wishes, and he had therefore no difficulty to apprehend on *that* score. She had ever been calmly submissive to his will; had the same lofty sense of family dignity that he enjoyed; and had often concurred in his deep regrets on account of the separation of the family interests. She was still unmarried—and yet, on her father's decease, would be a peeress in her own right, and possessed of the family estates. The fastidiousness which alone, thought the earl, had kept her hitherto single, would not, he felt persuaded, be allowed by her to interfere for the purpose of preventing so excellent a family arrangement as would be effected by her union with Titmouse. Once married—and he having secured for her suitable settlements from Titmouse—if there should prove to be any incompatibility of temper or discrepancy of disposition, come the worst to the worst, there was the shelter of a separation, and separate maintenance to look to; a thing which was becoming of daily occurrence—which implied no reproach to either party—and left them always at liberty to return to each other's society when so disposed. And as for the dress and manners of Titmouse, granting them to be a little extravagant, would not, in all probability, a word from her suffice to *reduce* him, or *elevate* him into a gentleman? Thus thought her fond and enlightened parent, and thus thought also she; from which it is evident, that Titmouse once brought to the point—made sensible where his duty and his privilege converged—it would be a straightforward plain-sailing business. To bring about so desirable a state of things as this—to give the young people an opportunity of thoroughly knowing one another, and endearing them-

selves to each other, were among the objects which the earl had proposed to himself, in accepting the invitation to Yatton.

Time was wearing on, however, and yet no decisive step had been taken. Lady Cecilia's icy coolness—her petrifying indifference of manner, her phlegmatic temperament and lofty pride, were qualities, all of which were calculated rather to check than encourage the advances of a suitor, especially such a one as Titmouse; but, though the earl did not know it, there were others whose ardour and impatience to possess themselves of such superior loveliness could not be similarly restrained or discouraged. Would the reader believe, that Mr. Venom Tuft, having been long on the look-out for an aristocratic wife, had conceived it not impossibie to engage the affections of Lady Cecilia—to fascinate her by the display of his brilliant acquirements; and that the comparative seclusion of Yatton would afford him the requisite opportunity for effecting his wishes? Yet even so it really was: intoxicated with vanity, which led him to believe himself peculiarly agreeable to women, he at length had the inconceivable folly and presumption, on the morning after an evening in which he fancied that he had displayed peculiar brilliance, to intimate to her that his affections were no longer under his own control, having been taken captive by her irresistible charms. Vain thought! as well might a cock-sparrow have sought to mate himself with the stately swan! It was for some time rather difficult for the Lady Cecilia to understand that he was seriously making her a proposal. At length, however, he succeeded; and as much astonishment as her drooping eyelids and languid hauteur of manner would permit the display of, she evinced. When poor Mr. Tuft found that such was the case, his face burned like fire.

"You haven't mistaken me for Miss Macspleuchan, Mr. Tuft, have you?" said she, with a faint sly smile. "You and Mr. Titmouse, and the marquis, I hear, sate much longer after dinner last night than usual!" Tuft was utterly confounded. Was her ladyship insinuating

that he was under the influence of wine? He was speechless.

"I assure you, Lady Cecilia"——he stammered.

"Oh—now I understand!—You are rehearsing for Lady Caudle's private theatricals? Do you play there next month? Well, I dare say you'll make a delicious Romeo." Here the earl happened to enter, Lady Cecilia, with a languid smile, apprised him that Mr. Tuft had been rehearsing, to admiration, a love-scene which he was studying against Lady Caudle's theatricals; on which the earl, with a good-natured smile, said that he should like to witness it, unless it were too much trouble. If Mr. Tuft could have crept up the chimney without being observed, he could have employed the first moment of repose and security in praying that the Lady Cecilia might bring herself to believe, that he had really been doing what at present he feared she only affected to believe. He resolved to outstay the earl, who, indeed, withdrew in a few minutes' time, having entered only for the purpose of asking Lady Cecilia a question; and on her ladyship and her would-be lover being again alone—

"If I have been guilty of presumption, Lady Cecilia"—he commenced with tremulous earnestness, looking a truly piteous object.

"Not the least, Mr. Tuft," said she, calmly smiling; "or, even if you *have*, I'll forgive it on one condition"—

"Your ladyship has only to intimate"——

"That you will go through it all with Miss Macspleuchan; or, couldn't we get up a sweet scene with my maid? Annette is a pretty little thing, and her broken English"——

"Your ladyship is pleased to be exceedingly severe; but I feel that I deserve it. Still, knowing your ladyship's good-nature, I will venture to ask one great favour, which, if you refuse, I will within an hour quit Yatton; that your ladyship will, in mercy to my feelings, mention this little scene to no one."

"If you wish it, Mr. Tuft, I will preserve your secret," she replied in a kinder and more serious manner than he had ever witnessed in her; and, when he had escaped

into solitude, he could hardly tell whom he hated most—himself or the Lady Cecilia.

Several days afterwards, the Marquis Gants-Jaunes de Millefleurs, purposing to quit Yatton on his way northward, sought a favourable opportunity to lay himself—the brilliant, irresistible marquis—at the feet of the all-conquering Lady Cecilia, the future Lady Drelincourt, peeress in her own right, and mistress of the family estates. He had done the same kind of thing half-a-dozen times to as many women—all of them of ample fortune, and most of them, also, of rank. His manner was exquisitely delicate and winning; but Lady Cecilia, with a slight blush, (for she was really pleased,) calmly refused him. He saw it was utterly in vain; for a few moments he felt in an unutterably foolish position, but quickly recovering himself, assumed an air of delicate raillery, and put her into such good humour, that, forgetful in the moment of her promise to poor Tuft, she, in the strictest confidence in the world, communicated to the marquis the offer which Mr. Tuft had been beforehand with him in making her! The marquis's cheek flushed and tingled; and, without being able to analyse what passed through his mind, the result was, an intolerable feeling, as if he and Tuft were a couple of sneaking adventurers, and worse—of exposed adventurers. For almost the first time in his life, he felt an embarrasment amid the momentary conflict of his thoughts and feelings, which kept him silent. At length, "I presume, Lady Cecilia," said he in a low tone, with an air of distress, and a glance that did more in his behalf with Lady Cecilia than a thousand of his most flattering and eloquent speeches, "I shall, in like manner, have afforded amusement to your ladyship and Mr. Tuft?"

"Sir," said she, haughtily, and colouring,—"Mr. Tuft and the Marquis Gants-Jaunes de Millefleurs, are two very different persons; I am surprised, Monsieur le Marquis, that you should have made such an observation."

He felt greatly consoled, and perfectly secure against being exposed to Tuft, as Tuft had been exposed to him. Yet he was mistaken. How can the reader forgive Lady Cecilia for her double breach of promise, when he is in-

formed that a day or two afterwards, Tuft and she being thrown together, partly out of pity to her rejected and bitterly-mortified suitor, and partly from an impulse of womanly vanity, and partly from a sort of glimpse of even-handed justice, requiring such a step as a kind of reparation to Tuft for her exposure of him to the marquis —she, in the strictest confidence, informed him that his example had been followed by the marquis, forgetful of that excellent maxim, "begin nothing of which you have not well considered the end."

It had not occurred to her ladyship as being a thing almost certain to ensue upon her breach of faith, that Tuft should ask her whether she had violated *his* confidence. He did so; she blushed scarlet—and though, like her papa, she could have equivocated when she could not have lied, here she was in a dilemma from which nothing but a fib could possibly extricate her; and in a confident tone, but with a burning cheek, she simply told a falsehood, and had the pain of being conscious, by Mr. Tuft's look, that he scarcely believed her. Nothing could exceed the comical air of embarrassment of the marquis and Mr. Tuft, whenever, after this, they were alone together! To return, however, to the Earl of Dreddlington, (who was really in ignorance of the Marquis and Mr. Tuft's proposals to Lady Cecilia,) the difficulty which at present harassed his lordship was, how he could, without compromising his own dignity, or injuring his darling scheme by a premature developement of his purpose, sound Titmouse upon the subject. How to break the ice—to broach the subject—was the great problem which the earl turned over and over again in his mind. Now be it observed, that when a muddle-headed man is called upon at length *to act*, however long beforehand he may have had notice of it—however assured of the necessity there will be for eventually taking one course or another, and consequently enjoying an ample opportunity for consideration, he remains confused and irresolute up to the very *last instant*—when he acts, after all, merely as the creature of caprice and impulse,—'twas thus with Lord Dreddlington. He had thought of half-a-dozen different ways of commencing with Titmouse, and

decided upon adopting each; yet, when the anxiously-looked for moment had arrived, he lost sight of them all, in his inward fluster and narrowness.

'Twas noon, and Titmouse, smoking a cigar, was walking slowly up and down, his hands stuck into his surtout pockets, and resting on his hips, in the fir-tree walk at the end of the garden—the spot to which he seemed, during the stay of his grand guests, to have been tacitly restricted for the enjoyment of that luxury. When the earl saw that Titmouse was aware that his lordship had observed him, and tossed aside his cigar, the earl "begged" he would go on, and tried to calm and steady himself, by a moment's reflection upon his overwhelming superiority over Titmouse in every respect; but it was in vain.

Now what anxiety and embarrassment would the earl have been spared had he been aware of one little fact, that Mr. Gammon was unconsciously, secretly, and potently his lordship's friend in the great matter which lay so near to his heart? For so it was in truth. He had used all the art he was master of, and availed himself of all his mysterious power over Titmouse, to get him at all events to make an advance to his distinguished kinswoman. Considering, however, how necessary it was "to be off with the old love before he was on with the new," he had commenced operations by satisfying Titmouse how vain and hopeless, and, indeed, unworthy of him, was his passion for poor Miss Aubrey. Here, however, Gammon had not so much difficulty to contend with as he had anticipated; for Miss Aubrey's image had been long ago jostled out of his recollection, by the innumerable brilliant and fashionable women among whom he had been latterly thrown. When, therefore, Gammon informed him that Miss Aubrey had fallen into a decline; and that, moreover, when he (Gammon) had, according to his promise to Titmouse, taken an opportunity of pressing his wishes upon her, she had scornfully scouted the bare notion of such a thing; all of which was, of course, Mr, Gammon's pure invention.

"'Pon—my soul! The—devil—she did!" said Titmouse, with an air of insolent astonishmont. "The gal's

a devilish pretty gal, no doubt," he presently continued, knocking the ashes off his cigar, with an indifferent air; "but—it's too good a joke—'pon my soul it is; but d'ye think, Gammon, she ever supposed I *meant* marriage? By Jove!" Here he winked his eye at Gammon, and then slowly expelled a mouthful of smoke. Gammon had grown pale with the conflict excited within, by the last words of the execrable little miscreant. He controlled his feelings, however, and succeeded in preserving silence.

"Ah—well!" continued Titmouse after another whiff or two, with an air of commiseration, "if the poor gal's *booked*—eh? it's no use; there's no harm done. Devilish poor, all of 'em, I hear! It's d——d hard, by the way, Gammon, that the prettiest gals are always the soonest picked off."

As soon as Gammon had completely mastered his feelings, he proceeded to excite the pride and ambition of Titmouse, by representations of the splendour of an alliance with the last representative of so ancient and illustrious a house; in fact, when Gammon came, he said, to think of it, he found that it was *too* grand a stroke, and that she would not entertain the notion for a moment; that she had refused crowds of young lords; that she would be a peeress of the realm in her own right, with an independent income of £5000 a-year; mansions, seats, and castles, in each of the four quarters of the kingdom:—topics such as these excited and inflated him to the full extent desired by Mr. Gammon, who, moreover—that was the great topic of his last interview with Titmouse, before leaving Yatton, as I have already apprised the reader—with great solemnity of manner, gave him distinctly to understand, that on his being able to effect an alliance with the Lady Cecilia, absolutely depended his continuance in, or expulsion from the possession of the whole Yatton property. Thus it came to pass, that Titmouse was penetrated by a far keener desire to ally himself to the Lady Cecilia, than ever the earl had experienced to bring about such an auspicious event; and at the very moment of Titmouse's catching sight of the earl, while pacing up and down the fir-tree

walk, inhaling the soothing influence of his cigar—as I a short time ago presented him to the reader—he was tormenting himself with apprehensions that such a prize was too splendid for *him* to draw, and asking himself the constantly recurring question, how, in the name of all that was funny, could he set the thing a going?—When Greek met Greek, *then* came—it was said—the tug of war: and when the Earl of Dreddlington and Titmouse—a great fool and a little fool—came to encounter each other—each impelled by the same wishes, and restrained by similar apprehensions—it was like the encounter of two wily diplomatists, sitting down with the intention of outwitting each other, in obtaining an object, in respect of which their aim was, unknown to each other in fact, precisely coincident, this hidden coincidence being the exact point which their exquisite manœuvres had succeeded in reciprocally masking, it being quite possible for Talleyrand and Pozzo di Borgo, pitted against each other, under similar circumstances, to separate, after a dozen long conferences, each having failed to secure their common object—peace.

"Well, Mr. Titmouse"—commenced the earl, blandly, springing at once, with graceful boldness, out of the mist, confusion, and perplexity which prevailed amongst his lordship's ideas—"*what are you thinking about?*—For you seem to be thinking!" and a courteous little laugh accompanied the last words.

"'Pon—'pon my life—I—*beg* your lordship's pardon—but it's—monstrous odd your lordship should have known it"—stammered Titmouse, his face suddenly grew of a scarlet colour. "Sir," replied the earl, with greater skill than he had ever evinced in his whole life before—such is the effect of any one's being intensely in earnest—"it is not at all odd, when it happens that—the probability is—that—we are, perhaps—mind, sir, I mean possibly—thinking about the same thing!" Titmouse grew more and more confused, gazing in silence, with a strange simpering stare at his noble companion, who, with his hands joined behind him, was walking slowly along, with Titmouse.

"Sir," continued the earl, in a low tone—breaking a

very awkward pause—"it gives me sincere satisfaction to assure you, that I can fully appreciate the delicate embarrassment which I perceive you are now"——

"My lord—your lordship's most *uncommon* polite"—quoth Titmouse, suddenly taking off his hat, and bowing very low. The earl moved his hat also, and slightly bowed, with a proudly-gratified air; and again occurred a little pause, which was broken by Titmouse.

"Then your lordship thinks it will do?" he inquired very sheepishly, but anxiously.

"Sir, I have the honour to assure you, that as far as *I* am concerned, I see no obst——"

"Yes—but excuse me, my lord—your lordship sees—I mean—my lord, your lordship sees——"

"Sir, I think—nay, I believe I *do*,"—interrupted the earl, wishing to relieve the evident embarrassment of his companion—"but—I see nothing that should alarm you."

How interesting to watch the mysterious process by which these two powerful minds were gradually approximating towards understanding each other! 'Twas a sort of *equation* with an unknown quantity, in due course of evolution!

"Doesn't your lordship, indeed?" inquired Titmouse, rather briskly.

"Sir, it was a saying of one of the great—I mean, sir, it is—you must often have heard, sir—in short, *nothing venture, nothing have.*"

"I'd venture a precious deal, my lord, if I only thought I could get what *I'm* after!"

"Sir?" exclaimed the earl, condescendingly.

"If your lordship would only be so particular—so uncommon kind—as to name the thing to her ladyship—by way of—eh, my lord? A sort of breaking the ice, and all that——"

"Sir, I feel, and have a just pride in assuring you, that the Lady Cecilia is a young lady of that superior delicacy of——"

"*Does* your lordship really think I've a *ghost* of a chance?" interrupted Titmouse, anxiously. "*She* must have named the thing to your lordship, no doubt—eh, my lord?"

This queer notion of the young lady's delicacy a little staggered her distinguished father for a moment or two. What was he to say? She and he had really often named the thing to each other; and here the question was put to him plumply. The earl scorned a flat lie, and never condescended to equivocation except when it was absolutely necessary.

"Sir," he said, hesitatingly; "undoubtedly—if I were to say—that now and then, when your attentions have been so pointed"——

"'Pon my life, my lord, I never meant it; if your lordship will only believe me," interrupted Titmouse earnestly; "I beg a thousand pardons—I meant no harm, my lord."

"Sir, there is no harm done," said the earl kindly. "Sir, I know human nature too well, or I have lived thus long to little purpose, not to be aware that we are not always master of our own feelings."

"That's exactly it, my lord! Excuse me, but your lordship's hit the thing!"

"Do not imagine, Mr. Titmouse, that I think your attentions may have been *unpleasant* to the Lady Cecilia – by no means; I cannot, with truth, say any such thing!"

"Oh, my lord!" exclaimed Titmouse, taking off his hat, bowing, and placing his hand upon his breast, where his little heart was palpitating with unusual force and distinctness.

"*Faint heart*, says the proverb, Mr. Titmouse—ah, ha!" quoth the earl, with gentle gayety.

"Yes, my lord, it's enough to make one faint, indeed! Now, if your lordship—(I'm not used to the sort of thing, my lord!)—would just make a sort of beginning for me, my lord, with the Lady Cicely—to set us going, my lord—the least shove would do, my lord."

"Well, Mr. Titmouse," said the earl, with a gracious smile, "since your modesty is so overpowering—I'll try—to—become your ambassador to the Lady Cecilia. If, Mr. Titmouse," his lordship presently added, in a serious tone, "you are fortunate enough to succeed in engaging the affections of the Lady Cecilia, you will discover that you have secured indeed an invaluable prize."

"To be sure, my lord! And consider, too, her ladyship's uncommon high rank—it's so particular condescending.—By the way, my lord, will she—if she and I can hit it off, so as to marry one another—be called *Mrs. Titmouse*, or shall I be called *Lord Titmouse?* I wonder how that will be, my lord? 'Tis only, your lordship understands, on Lady Cicely's account I ask, because it's, in course, all one *to me* when once we're married."

The earl was gazing at him as he went on, with an expression of mingled surprise and concern: presently, however, he added with calm seriousness, "Sir, it is not an unreasonable question, though I should have imagined that you could hardly have been—but—in short the Lady Cecilia will retain her rank, and become the Lady Cecilia Titmouse—that is, during my life: but, on my demise, she succeeds to the barony of Drelincourt, and then will be called, of course, Lady Drelincourt."

"And what shall *I* be then, my lord?" inquired Titmouse, eagerly.

"Sir, you will of course continue Mr. Titmouse"——

"'Pon my life, my lord—shall I indeed?" he interrupted, with a crest-fallen air, "Mr. Titmouse and Lady Drelincourt? Excuse me, my lord, but it don't sound at all like man and wife"——

"Sir, so it always has been, and will be, and so it ever ought to be," replied the earl gravely.

"Well but, my lord, (excuse me, my lord)—but marriage is a very serious thing, my lord, your lordship knows."

"It is, sir, indeed," replied the earl, gloom visibly overspreading his features.

"Suppose," continued Titmouse, "Lady Cicely should die before me."

The earl remaining silent, fixed on Titmouse the eye of a FATHER—a father, though a very foolish one; and presently, with a sensible tremor in his voice, replied, "Sir, these are rather singular questions—but, in such a mournful contingency as the one you have hinted at"—

"Oh, my lord! I humbly beg pardon—of course, I should be, 'pon my soul, my lord, most uncommon sorry"—interrupted Titmouse, with a little alarm in his manner.

"I was saying, sir—that in such an event, if Lady Drelincourt left no issue, you would succeed to the barony; but, should she leave issue, they will be called Honourable"—

"What!—'the Honourable Tittlebat Titmouse,' if it's a boy, and the Honourable Cecilia Titmouse,' if it's a girl?"

"Sir, it will be so—unless you should choose to take the name and arms of Dreddlington, on marrying the sole heiress"—

"Oh! indeed, my lord? 'Pon my life, my lord, that's worth considering—because I a'n't over and above pleased with my own name. What will it cost to change it now, my lord!"

"Sir," said the earl, struck with the idea, "that is really a matter worth considering. In a matter of that magnitude, sir, I presume that expense would not be a matter of serious consideration."

After some further conversation, the earl came plump upon the great pivot upon which the whole arrangement was to turn—settlements and jointures—oh, as to *them*, Titmouse, who was recovering from the shock of the discovery that his marriage, however it might degrade the Lady Cecilia, would not ennoble him—promised every thing—would leave every thing in the hands of his lordship. Soon afterwards they separated: the earl suggesting to him, that probably in a matter of infinite delicacy, like that on which they had been conversing, he would keep his own counsel—to which also Titmouse pledged himself. Soon afterwards, and before seeing his daughter, with an anxious, but not an excited air, he ordered his horse and took a long ride, accompanied only by his groom: and if ever in his whole life he had attempted serious REFLECTION, it was on the occasion of that same long, slow, and solitary ride; then, for the first time, he forgot his peerage, and thought only of the *man*—and the father.

But to what purpose? Shortly after his return, he sought the Lady Cecilia, and performed his promise, by preparing her to receive, probably on the ensuing day, the proposals of TITTLEBAT TITMOUSE.

The desired opportunity occurred the next day. Titmouse had slept like a top all night, after smoking in his bed-room a great many cigars, and drinking two or three tumblers of brandy and water; but Lady Cecilia had passed a very uneasy, and almost a sleepless night, and did not make her appearance at the breakfast-table. Understanding, however, that her ladyship was in the drawing-room and alone, about noon, Titmouse, who had bestowed during the interval more than usual pains upon his dress, gently opened the door, and observing that she was alone, reclining on the sofa, with a sudden beating of the heart, closed the door and approached her, bowing profoundly. Poor Lady Cecilia immediately sate up, very pale and trembling.

"Good-morning, good-morning, Lady Cicely," commenced Titmouse, taking a chair and sitting down in it, plump opposite to her.

"You aren't well this morning, are you, Lady Cicely?" said he, observing how pale she looked, and that she did not seem disposed to speak.

"I am quite well," she replied in a low tone; and then each was silent.

"It's beginning to look like winter a little, eh, Lady Cicely?" said he, after an embarrassing pause, looking through the windows. 'Twas an overcast day; and a strong wind was stripping the sere and yellow leaves in great numbers from the lofty trees which were not far distant, and which gave forth a melancholy rushing moaning sound; and another pause ensued.

"Certainly it is getting rather cheerless," replied Lady Cecilia. Titmouse turned pale; and, twirling his fingers in his hair, fixed upon her a stupid and most embarrassing look, under which her eyes fell towards the ground, and remained looking in that direction.

"I—I—hope his lordship's been saying a good word for me, Lady Cecilia?"

"My father mentioned your name to me yesterday," she replied, trembling excessively.

"'Pon my soul, monstrous kind!" said Titmouse, trying desperately to look at his ease. "Said he'd break the ice for me." Here ensued another pause. "Every body

must have a beginning, you know. 'Pon my solemn honour, all he said about me is quite true." Profoundly as was Lady Cecilia depressed, she looked up at Titmouse for a moment with evident surprise. "Now, Lady Cicely, just as between friends, didn't he tell you something very particular about *me?* Didn't he? Eh?" She made him no answer.

"I dare say, Lady Cicely, though somehow you look sad enough, you a'n't vexed to see me here? Eh? There's many and many a woman in London that would—but it's no use now. 'Pon my soul I love you, I do, Lady Cicely;" she trembled violently, for he was drawing his chair nearer to her. She felt sick—sick almost to death.

"I know it's—it's a monstrous unpleasant piece of—I mean it's an awkward thing to do: but I hope you love *me*, Lady Cicely, eh? a little?" Her head hung down, and a very scalding tear oozed out and trickled down her cheek. "Hope you ar'nt sorry, dear Lady Cicely? *I'm* most uncommon proud and happy! Come, Lady Cicely." He took the thin white hand that was nearest him, and raised it to his lips: had his perception been only a trifle keener, he could not have failed to perceive a faint thrill pervade Lady Cecilia as he performed this act of gallantry, and an expression of features which looked very much like disgust. He had seen love made on the stage frequently, and, as he had seen lovers do there, he now dropped down on one knee, still holding Lady Cecilia's hand in his, and pressing it a second time to his lips.

"If your ladyship will only make me—so happy—as to be—my wife—'pon my life, you're welcome to all I have; and you may consider this place entirely your own! Do you understand me, dearest Lady Cicely? Come! 'Pon my life—I'm quite distracted—do you love me, Lady Cicely? Only say the word." A faint—a very faint sound issued from her lips—'twas "Yes." Oh, poor Lady Cecilia!

"Then, as true as God's in heaven, dear gal, I love you," said he, with ardour and energy; and rising from his knee, he sate down beside her upon the sofa—placed an arm round her waist, and with his other hand grasped hers—and—imprinted a kiss upon the pale cheek which

had been so haughtily withdrawn from the presumptuous advances of the Marquis de Millefleurs, and from some half-dozen others; several of whom were men of high real pretensions—elegant in person and manners—of great accomplishments—of intellect—of considerable fortune—of good family; but in her opinion, and that of the earl her father, not of family good *enough*, nor fortune considerable *enough*, to entitle them to an alliance with her.

"'Pon my life, Lady Cicely, you *are* a most lovely gal," quoth Titmouse, with increasing energy—and now you're all my own! Though I *am* only plain Mr. Titmouse, and you'll be Lady Cicely still. I'll make you a good husband!" and again he pressed her hand and kissed her cold cheek. But slow and dull as were the Lady Cecilia's feelings, they were becoming too much excited to admit of her continuing much longer in the room.

"I'm sure you'll excuse me, Mr. Titmouse," said she, rising and speaking quickly and faintly. When she had regained her room, she wept bitterly for upwards of an hour; and Miss Macspleuchan, who knew full well the cause of it, knew not how to console one who had so deliberately prostrated herself before the hideous little image of Mammon; who, in degrading herself, had also—and Miss Macspleuchan's bosom swelled with wounded pride and indignation at the thought—degraded her whole sex. In due time, however, the *Aurora*, a morning fashionable London newspaper, thus announced to the public the auspicious event which I have so faithfully, feeling much pain the while, described to the reader:—

"It is rumoured that Mr. Titmouse, who so lately recovered the very large estates of Yatton, in Yorkshire, and whose appearance in the fashionable world has created so great a sensation; and who is already connected, by consanguinity, with the ancient and noble family of Dreddlington, is about to form a closer alliance with it, and is now the accepted suitor of the lovely and accomplished Lady Cecilia Philippe Leopoldina Plantagenet, sole daughter and heiress of the Right Hon. the Earl of Dreddlington, and next in succession to the barony of Drelincourt, the most ancient, we believe, in the kingdom."

CHAPTER III.

Behold now, patient and reflecting reader—for in your eyes it is anxiously desired that this history (however imperfectly given) may find favour—the dreadful—the desperate reverse in Mr. Aubrey's circumstances. He has suddenly fallen from a very commanding position in society: from that of a high-born English gentleman, possessed of a fine unencumbered income, and all of luxury and splendour, and of opportunity for gratifying a disposition of noble munificence, that it can secure—and whose qualifications and prospects justified him in aspiring to the highest senatorial distinction:—behold him, I say, with his beloved and helpless family, sunk—lower than into straitened circumstances—beneath even poverty—into *debt*—and that of a hopless description!—seeing that no one can be so secure, but that all this, or something of the like kind, may one day or other happen to him, 'tis hoped that it will be found neither uninteresting nor uninstructive to watch carefully and closely the present condition and *conduct* of the Aubreys.

Bound hand and foot—so to speak—as Mr. Aubrey felt himself, and entirely at the mercy of Mr. Titmouse and his solicitors, Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, what could he but submit to almost any terms on which they chose to insist?—It will be recollected that Mr. Gammon's proposal was, that Mr. Aubrey should forthwith discharge, without scrutiny, their bill of £3946, 14s. 6d.; give sufficient security for the payment of the sum of £10,000 to Mr. Titmouse, within twelve or eighteen months' time, and two promissory notes for the sum of £5000 each, payable at some future period, as to which he had to rely solely on the sincerity and forbearance of Mr. Gammon, and the ratification of his acts by Mr. Titmouse. This proposal was duly communicated by the unfortunate Aubrey to

Messrs. Runnington, who obtained a fortnight's time in which to deliberate upon it; at the end of which period, he was advised by them to accept the proposed terms as unquestionably fair, and, under circumstances, much more lenient than could have been expected. This might be so; but yet, how dismaying and hopeless to *him* the idea of him carrying it into effect! *How, indeed, was it to be done?* First of all, how were Messrs. Runningtons' and Mr. Parkinson's bills to be got rid of—the former amounting to £1670, 12s., the latter to £756? And how were Mr. Aubrey and his family to *live* in the meanwhile, and how, moreover, were to be met the expenses of his legal education? As was intimated in a former part of this history, all that Mr. Aubrey had, on settling in London, was £3000 stock (equal to £2640 of money) and £423 in his banker's hands;—so that all his cash in hand was £3063; and if he were to devote the whole of it to the discharge of the three attorneys' bills which he owed, he would still leave a gross balance unpaid of £3310, 6s. 6d.! And yet for *him* to talk of *giving security* for the payment of £10,000 within eighteen months, and his own notes of hand for £10,000 more! It was really almost maddening to sit down and contemplate all this. But he could not fold his arms in impotence and despair—he must look his difficulties straight in the face, and do the best that was in his power. He resolved to devote every farthing he had, except £200, to the liquidation of Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap's account, and (in smaller proportion) of those also of Messrs. Runnington and Mr. Parkinson: if necessary he resolved, though his heart thrilled with anguish at the thought, to sell his books, and the remnant of old family plate that he had preserved. Then he would strain every nerve to contribute towards the support of himself and of his family—poor oppressed soul!—by his literary exertions, in every moment that he could spare from his legal studies; and practise the severest economy that was consistent with health and the preservation of a respectable exterior. He resolved also, though with a shudder, to commit himself to Gammon and Titmouse's mercy, by handing to them (though a fearful farce it seemed) his two notes of hand for £10,000—*payable on demand*—for such Gam-

mon intimated was usual in such a case, and would be required in the present one. But whither was he to look for security for the payment of £10,000 within eighteen months' time? This was a matter that indeed staggered him, and almost prostrated his energies whenever he directed them to the subject; it occasioned him inexpressible agitation and anguish. Individuals there were, he believed—he knew—who would cheerfully enter into the desired security on his behalf; but what a mockery—cruel and insulting! For them to be asked to secure *his* payment of the sum at the time mentioned, was, in effect, palpably asking them to pay the money for him, and in that light they could not but view such an application. The reader will easily understand the potency of such considerations upon so sensitive and high-minded a person as Aubrey. While revolving these distracting and harassing topics in his mind, the name of Lord de la Zouch always presented itself to him. Had he not solemnly—repeatedly—*pledged* himself to communicate with that kind and wealthy and generous nobleman, in such an emergency as the present? His lordship's income was at least eighty or a hundred thousand pounds a-year; his habits were simple and unostentatious, though he was of a truly munificent disposition; and he had not a large and expensive family—his only child being Mr. Delamere. He had ever professed, and, as far as he had hitherto had an opportunity, proved himself to be a devoted, a most affectionate friend to Mr. Aubrey:—did not Providence, then, seem to point him out distinctly as one who should be applied to, to rescue from destruction a fallen friend? And why should Aubrey conjure up an array of imaginary obstacles, arising out of excessive and morbid fastidiousness? And whom were such scruples reducing to destitution along with him?—his wife, his children, his devoted and noble-minded sister! But, alas, the thought of sweet Kate suggested another source of exquisite pain and embarrassment to Aubrey, who well knew the ardent and inextinguishable passion for her entertained by young Delamere. 'Twas true, that to pacify his father, and also not to grieve or harass Miss Aubrey by the constant attentions, with which he would have otherwise followed her, he had consented to devote him-

self with great assiduity and ardour to his last year's studies at Oxford; yet was he by no means an infrequent visiter at Vivian Street, resolutely regardless of the earnest entreaties of Miss Aubrey, and even of her brother. Not that there was any thing indelicate or obtrusive in his attentions; how could it be? Alas! Kate really loved him, and it required no very great acuteness in Delamere to discover it. He was as fine, handsome, a young fellow as you could see anywhere; frank, high-spirited, accomplished, with an exceedingly elegant deportment, and simple, winning manners—and could she but be touched with a lively sense of the noble disinterestedness of his attachment to her! I declare that Kate wrote him several letters in dissuasion of his addresses, that wore such a genuine and determined air of repulsion as would have staggered most men; but young Delamere cared not one straw for any of them: let Kate vary her tone as she pleased, he simply told her that he had sent them to his mother, who said they were very good letters indeed; so he would make a point of reading all she would send him, and so forth.

When Kate, with too solemn an emphasis to be mistaken or encountered with raillery, assured him that nothing upon earth should prevail upon her to quit her present station in her brother's family, at all events until he had completely surmounted all his troubles, Delamere, with looks of fond admiration, would reply that it signified nothing, as he was prepared to wait her pleasure, and submit to any caprice or unkindness which her heart would let her exhibit. I must own that poor Kate was, on more than one occasion of his exhibiting traits of delicate generosity towards her brother, so moved and melted towards her lover, that she could—shall I say it?—have sunk into his arms in silent and passionate acquiescence; for her heart had, indeed, long been really his. Now, I say, when Mr. Aubrey adverted for a moment to this state of things, was it not calculated a thousand-fold to enhance the difficulty of his applying *to the father of Delamere?* So indeed it was; and, torn with conflicting emotions and considerations of this kind, nearly the whole of the fortnight granted to him for deliberation had elapsed, before he could make up his mind to apply to

Lord de la Zouch. At length, however, he determined to do so; and when he had dropped into the post-office his letter—one in every line of which the noble and generous person to whom it was addressed might easily detect the writhings of its writer's wounded spirit and broken heart—he looked indeed a melancholy object. The instant that, by dropping his letter into the box, he had irrecoverably parted with all the control over it, and to Lord de la Zouch it must go, Aubrey felt as if he would have given the world to recall it. Never had he heaved so many profound sighs, and felt so utterly miserable and destitute as during his walk homeward that afternoon. There they did not know of the step he had intended to take, nor did he tell them that he had taken it. When he saw his sister he felt sick at heart; and during the whole of the evening was so oppressed and subdued, that the faint anxious raillery of Mrs. Aubrey and Kate, and the unconscious sportiveness of his children, served only to deepen the gloom that was around his spirit. He had requested Lord de la Zouch to address his answer to him at the Temple; and sure enough, by return of post, Mr. Aubrey found lying on his desk, on reaching the Temple in the morning, a letter addressed "Charles Aubrey, Esq., at —— Weasel's Esq., No. 3, Pomegranate Court, Temple, London;" and franked, "De la Zouch."

"I shall return presently," said Mr. Aubrey to the clerk, with as much calmness as he could assume, having put the letter into his pocket, resolving to go into the Temple gardens and there read it, where any emotions which it might excite would be unobserved. Having at length seated himself on a bench, under one of the old trees near the river, with a somewhat tremulous hand he took out and opened the letter, and read as follows:

"Fotheringham Castle, 18th July, 18—.

"My very dear Aubrey,

"If you really value my friendship, never pain my feelings again by expressions of distrust as to the issue of *any* application of yours to me, such as are contained in your letter now lying before me. Has any thing that has ever hitherto passed between us justified them? For Heaven's

sake tell your attorneys not to lose a moment in procuring the necessary instruments, and forwarding them to me through Messrs. Framlingham, my lawyers; I will then execute them immediately, and return them to you by the next post or mail. If you will but at once set about this in a business-like way, I will forgive and forget all the absurd and *unkind* scruples with which your letter abounds. Since you would properly make a mighty stir about it, I shall not at present dwell upon the *inexpressible pleasure* it would give me to be allowed to exonerate you at once from the vulgar and grasping wretches who are now harassing you, my very dear Aubrey, and to constitute myself your creditor instead of them. But, on further consideration, I suppose you would distress yourself on the ground of *my restricted means* rendering it so much more difficult for me than for them to give you time for the payment of your debt!! Or will you play the man, and act at once in the way in which, I assure you, upon my honour, I would act by you, on a similar solicitation, were our situations reversed? By the way, I intend to insist on being your *sole surety;* unless, indeed, your creditors doubt my solvency, in which case I hope we shall be able, amongst our common friends, to find a sufficient co-surety.

"And now, dear Aubrey, how get you on with law? Does she smile or scowl upon you? I wonder why you did not go to the fountain-head, and become at once a pupil to your friend, the Attorney-General. Who is the gentleman whom you are reading with? He certainly has rather a curious name! Well, my dear Aubrey, Heaven in its own good time crown your virtuous efforts—your unconquerable resolution—with success! Won't it be odd if, when I am dead and gone, and my son is occupying my present place on the benches, you should be sitting on the woolsack? More unlikely things than this have come to pass: look at ——! How are dear Mrs. Aubrey and Miss Aubrey, and your little ones? Though we are going in a fortnight's time to fill this old place, (the ——s, the ——s, and the ——s, and others, are coming,) we shall be till then quite deserted, and so after they are gone. Would that we could insist on all of you taking up your abode with us! Have you seen Geoffrey lately? He tells me that he is working very hard indeed at Oxford;

and so says his tutor. It is more than ever I did. Pray write by return. I am ever, my dear Aubrey, yours, faithfully and affectionately,

"De la Zouch.

"Charles Aubrey, Esq.

"P. S. On further consideration, let *your* people send the deeds, &c., at once on to me, direct from themselves; —'tis a private matter, which is of no consequence to any one but ourselves. No one, indeed, except ourselves, your own solicitors, and your opponents, need know any thing about it. Neither Lady de la Zouch nor my son will have the least inkling of the matter."

No language of mine can do justice to the feelings with which Mr. Aubrey, after many pauses, occasioned by irrepressible emotion, perused the foregoing letter. Its generosity was infinitely enhanced by its delicacy; and both were most exquisitely appreciated by a man of his susceptibility, and in his circumstances. His eyes—his heart overflowed with unutterable gratitude towards the Almighty, and the noble instrument of his mercy. He would have flown on the wings of the wind to the dear beings in Vivian Street, with joyous face and light elastic step, to make them participators in his joy. He rose and walked to and fro by the river side with most exhilarated spirits. The sky was cloudless; the sun shone brilliantly; and innumerable brisk and busy craft were moving to and fro upon the swelling bosom of the magnificent Thames. Gladness was in his soul. The light without was typical of that within. Several times he was on the point of starting off to Vivian Street; but, on consideration, he resolved to go to Messrs. Runnington, and set them into instant communication with Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap; and matters having been set in train for the speediest possible settlement, Mr. Aubrey returned to chambers, but quitted them an hour earlier than usual, to brighten the countenances of those he loved by the joyous intelligence he bore. But he found that they also had cheering news to communicate; so that this was indeed a memorable day to them.

Old Lady Stratton, an early and bosom friend of the late Mrs. Aubrey, had, it may easily be believed, never ceased to take a lively interest in the fortunes of the unhappy Aubreys. She was now so far advanced in years; and though she enjoyed an ample income, derived from the liberality of her husband, Sir Beryl Stratton, baronet, who had died some twenty or thirty years before; yet, having no children, and seeing no necessity for saving money, she had followed the noble example of her deceased friend Mrs. Aubrey, and bestowed annually all her surplus income in the most liberal and systematic charity. Many years before, however, she had resolved upon making a provision for Miss Aubrey, whom she loved as if she had been her mother; and the expedient she had resorted to (quite unknown to the Aubreys) was to insure her life for the sum of £15,000, the whole of which sum she had intended to bequeath to Miss Aubrey.

The premiums on so large an insurance as this were heavy annual drains upon her purse; and, with her long-continued charities, and the expenditure necessary to support her station, left her but stinted means for contributing to the relief of the ruined Aubreys. With some difficulty, however, the old lady, in one way or another, principally by effecting a loan from the insurance company upon her policy, had contrived to raise a sum of £2000; and Miss Aubrey had that morning received a letter from her full of tenderness, begging her to present the sum in question (for which Lady Stratton had lodged a credit with her bankers in London) to her brother Mr. Aubrey, to dispose of as he pleased—trusting that it might be effectual in relieving him from the difficulties which were more immediately pressing upon him. Never had they spent so happy an evening together since they had quitted Yatton. In the excitement of the hour, even Aubrey felt for a while as if they now saw their way through all their embarrassments and dangers. Can the reader imagine what must have been the feelings of Miss Aubrey when she first heard of, and afterwards reflected upon, the princely munificence of Lord de la Zouch? If he can, it is well—it is more than I am equal to describing. They kept her awake more than half the night; and when she appeared at breakfast, her brother's quick eye

detected in her countenance the traces of a severe conflict of feelings.

With him also much of the excitement occasioned by the two occurrences above mentioned, had disappeared by the time that he took his seat in his little study at his usual early hour. First of all, he felt very uneasy in receiving so large a sum from Lady Stratton, whom he knew not to be rich—at all events, not rich enough to part with so considerable a sum without inconvenience; and he resolved not to accept of her proffered kindness, unless she would allow him to transmit to her his bond for the amount, together with interest. Surely this was an unnecessary step; yet where is the man who, on all occasions, acts precisely as a calm and reflecting observer of his conduct *long afterwards*, could have wished him to act? One must make allowance for the feelings which prompted him—those of a highly honourable and independent and over-sensitive man, who felt himself oppressed already by the weight of pecuniary obligation which he had incurred, and sought for the semblance of relief to his feelings, by receiving that as a loan only which had been nobly proffered as a gift; and thus, as it were, in point of fact destroying all the grace and courtesy of the benefaction; but it is useless discussing the matter. I regret that Mr. Aubrey should have allowed himself to be influenced by such considerations: but so it was—and poor old Lady Stratton was informed by him in a letter certainly abounding in expressions of heartfelt gratitude and affection, that he had availed himself of her generous assistance, but only on the terms of his being allowed to deposit his bond for the repayment of it, with interest, with her solicitors; earnestly trusting that, erelong, he should be enabled to fulfil his engagements to all who had assisted him.

This seasonable assistance enabled him to make the following arrangement for liquidating the sums due on account of the tremendous attorneys' bills:

Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap's bill was, -	£3946 14 6
Messrs. Runningtons' - - - - - - - - -	1670 12 0
Mr. Parkinson's, - - - - - - - - - -	756 0 0
	£6373 6 6

These were his liabilities. Then his assets were:

Money in the funds,	£2640
Money at his banker's,	423
Advanced by Lady Stratton,	2000
	£5063

As soon as he had made the foregoing statement on a slip of paper early in the morning in his study, he averted his eye from it for a moment with a sort of cold shudder. Were he to devote every farthing of assets that he had, he still could not come within £1310 odd of his mere attorneys' bills. What was he to do? The result of a long and anxious morning's calculation and scheming was to appropriate £4000 of his assets thus—(if he could prevail upon his creditors to be for the present content with it):

To Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap,	£2500
Messrs. Runnington,	1000
Mr. Parkinson,	500
	£4000

If this arrangement could be effected, then he would be able to reserve in his own hands £1063, and retain liabilities as under:

Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap's (balance,)	£1446 14 6
Messrs. Runnington's (ditto,)	670 12 0
Mr. Parkinson's (ditto,)	256 0 0
	£2373 6 6

Heavy was his heart at beholding this result of even the most favourable mode of putting his case: but he placed the memoranda in his pocket-book, and repaired to his dressing-room; and having completed his toilet, appeared at breakfast with as cheerful a countenance as he could assume. Each of the three assembled, perceived, however, that the others were *striving* to appear gay and happy. Suffice it to say, that within a week's time, Messrs. Runnington received the necessary security from Lord de

la Zouch, who had thereby bound himself in the penal sum of £20,000 that Mr. Aubrey should, on or before the 24th day of January 18—, (that is, in eighteen months' time from the date of the bond,) pay the principal sum of £10,000, with interest at 5 per cent; and this instrument, together with Mr. Aubrey's two promissory notes for £5000 each, and also cash to the amount of £2500 in part payment of their bill, having been delivered to Messrs. Quirk, Gammon and Snap—who, after a great deal of reluctance on the part of Mr. Quirk, finally consented to allow the balance of £1446 14s. 6d. to stand over—they delivered to him first a receipt for so much on account of their own bill; and secondly, an instrument by which Tittlebat Titmouse, for the considerations therein expressed, did remise, release, and for ever quit claim, unto Charles Aubrey, his heirs, executors, and other administrators, all other demands whatsoever, (*i. e.* other than the said sum of £20,000.) By this arrangement, Mr. Aubrey was absolutely exonerated from the sum of £40,000, in which he stood indubitably indebted to Mr. Titmouse, and so far he had just cause for congratulation. But was not his situation still one calculated to depress and alarm him more and more every time that he contemplated it? Where was he to find the sum requisite to release Lord de la Zouch from any part of his dreadful liability? For with such a surety in their power as that great and opulent peer, was it likely that Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, would be otherwise than peremptory and inflexible when the day of payment arrived? And if so, with what feelings must Mr. Aubrey see his noble and generous friend called upon to pay down nearly £11,000 for him? And was he not liable at any moment upon his own two notes for £5000 each? And were they not likely to insist speedily on the discharge of their own serious balance of £1446 odds? How likely that persons such as they and their client were represented to be, would, as soon as they decently could, proceed to extremities with him, in the confidence that the sight and the sound of his agonies would call in powerful and affluent friends to his assistance?

Still pressed, as indeed he was, his spirit had by no means lost its elasticity, supported as he was by a power-

ful, an unconquerable WILL and also by a devout reliance upon the protection of Providence. Though law is indeed an exhausting, an absorbing study, and it was pursued by Mr. Aubrey with unflagging energy, yet he found time (those who choose may find time enough for every thing) to contribute sensibly to the support of himself and his family by literary labours, expended principally upon compositions of an historical and political character, and which were forwarded from time to time to the distinguished Review which has been already mentioned. To produce, as he produced, articles of this description—of considerable length and frequency—requiring ready, extensive, and accurate knowledge, and careful composition; original and vigorous in their conceptions and their execution, and by their intrinsic merit arresting, immediately on their appearance, the attention of the public; I say, to do all this, and only in those precious intervals which ought to have been given to the relaxation of his strained faculties and physical powers—and under the pressure too of such overpowering anxieties as were his—argued surely the possession of first-rate energies—of a perfectly indomitable resolution.

All this while, moreover, he contrived to preserve an unruffled *temper*—which, with a man of such sensibilities as his, afforded indeed a signal instance of self-control; and, in short, on all these grounds, Mr. Aubrey appears entitled to the sympathy and respect of all reflecting persons. I spoke of his anxieties. Suppose, thought he, health should fail him, what was to become of him, and of those absolutely dependent upon him? Suppose illness should invade the dear members of his family, what was in prospect but destitution—or surrendering them up—bitter and heart-breaking contingency!—to the precarious *charity* of others? What would avail all his exhausting labours in the acquisition of professional knowledge, while his liberty was entirely at the command of Mr. Titmouse, and Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, who might, at any moment, actuated by mercenray motives, or impelled by caprice, blight all his prospects, and incarcerate him in a prison! Yet, under this burden—to adopt the language of Sir Henry Spelman on an analogous occasion, "*non ingentem solum, sed perpetuis*

humeris sustinendum"—Mr. Aubrey stood firmly. He felt that he was called upon to endure it; a blessed spirit ever, as it were, beside him, whispering the consolatory assurance, that all this was ordered and designed by the Supreme Disposer of events, as a *trial* of his constancy and of his faith, and that the *issue* was with him. It is mercifully ordained, that "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and that, too, in every turn and variety of mortal misery. It was so with Aubrey. So long as he felt his health unimpaired, and his mental energies in full vigour, he looked on these blessings as a sort of guarantee from Heaven that he should be able to carry on a successful, though it might be a long and wearisome struggle with adverse circumstances. Still it cost him a very painful effort to assume and preserve that exterior of tranquillity which should calm and assure the beloved beings associated with him in this hour of peril and suffering; and oftener than they chose to let him know of it, did the keen eyes of a wife's and sister's love detect the gloom and oppression which darkened his countenance and saddened his manner.

Theirs was, after all, with all that I have said, a happy little home. He was almost always punctual to his dinner-hour, to a minute, knowing how a thousand fears on his account would otherwise assail the fond beings who were counting the minutes till his arrival. When they had once thus met, they never separated till bed-time. Sometimes Miss Aubrey would sit down to her piano, and accompany herself in some song or air, which equally, whether merry or mournful, revived innumerable touching and tender recollections of former days, and she often ceased, tremulously and in tears, in which she was not infrequently joined by both of those who had been listening to her. Then he would betake himself to his labours for the rest of the evening, (not quitting the room) they either assisting him—fair and eager amanuenses! or themselves reading, or engaged at needle-work. Oh! it was ecstasy, too, to that poor oppressed father to enter into the wild sports and gambols of his light-hearted little ones, Charles and Agnes, who always made their appearance for about a couple of hours after dinner, to tell them "stories," to listen to theirs, to show them pictures, to

hear Charles read, and to join heartily in their frolics, rolling about even on the floor with them. But when he paused for a moment, and his wife and Kate succeeded him as their playmates, for a short interval, when his eye followed their movements, what sudden and sharp pangs would pass through his heart, as he thought of the future and what was to become of them!—And when their maid arrived at the appointed hour, causing all fun instantly to cease, and longing looks to be directed to papa and mamma, saying as plainly as could be said, "only a *few* minutes more," how fondly would he fold them in his arms! and when he felt their little arms clasping his neck and caressing him, and their kisses "all over" his face, feelings were excited within him, which were too deep for utterance—which defy description.

'Tis said, I believe, of Robespierre, or some other tyrant, as an instance of his fearful refinement in cruelty, that a person of distinction who had become obnoxious to him he formally condemned to death, but allowed to remain in the torturing, the excruciating presence of his lovely family; he and they aware, all the while, that his doom was *irrevocable*, inevitable; and he momentarily liable to the summons to the guillotine, and which in fact came at length, when they were all seated together one day, at the breakfast table! Oh, the feelings with which that unfortunate person must have daily regarded the countenance of those around him! How applicable to his condition the heart-breaking strains of Medea—

> Φεῦ, φεῦ, τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;
> Τί προσγελᾶτε τὸν πανύστατον γέλων;
> Αἰ, αἰ, τί δράσω; Καρδία γὰρ οἴχεται,
> Γυναῖκες, ὄμμα παιδρὸν ὡς εἶδον τέκνων.*

The above passage was one that very frequently, on the occasion I have alluded to, occurred to the mind of Mr. Aubrey; for he felt himself indeed every moment at the mercy of those to whom he owed such tremendous sums of money, and for which he was liable to be, at any moment that might be selected by malice or rapacity, plucked from his little home, and cast into prison!

* Μήδεια, 1036–9.

Oh, happy ye, now reading these pages, penned by one who has seen much trouble in his time,—oh, happy ye, "*unto whom the lines are fallen in pleasant places, yea, who have a goodly heritage;*" who live as it were in a "*land flowing with milk and honey;*" with whom life glides away like a tranquil and pleasant dream; who are not sternly bidden "*to eat your bread with quaking, and drink your water with trembling and with carefulness,*"* nor "*in vain to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows;*" who have, indeed, "*no thought for the morrow;*"—oh, ye who have leisure and ample means to pursue the objects of an honourable ambition, undisturbed by daily fears for daily bread—by terror, lest implacable creditors should at length frustrate all your efforts, drive you from your position in society, and precipitate you and yours into ruin;—I say, oh ye! do I appeal to you in vain? Do you turn from this painful portion of my narrative with indifference, or contempt, or wearisomeness? If the mere description, brief though it may be, of the sufferings of the Aubreys be trying and disagreeable to you, what must have been to them the actual *endurance?*

Poor Aubrey! as he walked along the crowded thoroughfares, morning and evening, between the Temple and Vivian Street, what a disheartening consciousness he felt of his personal insignificance! Which of the passengers, patrician or plebeian, that met or passed him, cared one straw for him, or would have cared a straw for him, had they even known the load of misery and misfortune with which he staggered past them. Every time that he thus passed between the scene of his absorbing labours at the Temple, and that green spot—his house in Vivian Street—in the world's wide desest, where only his heart was refreshed by the never-failing spring of domestic love and tenderness, he felt, as it were, but a prisoner out upon parole! It is easy to understand that when a man walks along the streets of London, depressed in spirit, and alarmed by the consciousness of increasing pecuniary embarrassment, his temper is likely to become irritable, his deportment forbidding, his spirit stern and

* Ezek. xii. 18.

soured, particularly against those who appeal to his charity, which then, indeed, he feels bitterly—*to begin at home.* It was not so, however, with Aubrey, whose constant feeling was—*Haud ignarus mali, miseris succurere disco ;* and though it may appear a small thing to mention, I feel gratification in recording of him, that desperate as were his circumstances, infinitely enhanced to him as was the value of money, he went seldom unprovided with the means of relieving the humbler applicants for charity whom he passed in the streets—of dropping some small token of his love and pity into the trembling and feeble hand of *want*—of those whose necessities he felt to be greater even than his own.

Never, indeed, did the timid eye of the most tattered, starved, and emaciated object that is suffered to crawl along the streets catch that of Mr. Aubrey, without making his heart acknowledge the secret bond of misery which bound them together—that he beheld a brother in bondage, and on whom he cheerfully bestowed the humble pittance which he believed that Providence had yet left at his disposal. Prosperity and adversity have equally the effect upon an inferior mind and heart, of generating *selfishness.* The one encourages, the other forces it. Misery is apt to think its own sufferings greater than those of any one else—and naturally. The eye, as it were, is filled with the object; distress and danger—that is nearest —that is in such fearful contiguity, obscuring from view all remoter objects, at once scaring away presence of mind, and centring its hopes and fears upon *self.* Not so, however, is it when a noble nature is the sufferer—and more especially when that nature is strengthened and brightened by the support and consolation derived from philosophy—and, above all, religion. To many a strong spirit, destitute of such assistance, alas! how often, under similar circumstances, have come—ghastly visitants!—*Despair* and *Madness*, with their hideous attendant Suicide, to do their bidding? But a Christian will pass through the most fearful storms, with an unexpected calmness and sense of security. What would have become of the three youths cast into the burning fiery furnace, but for the presence of that *fourth* awful Being, the sight of whom confounded and affrighted Nebuchadnezzar, but,

accompanied by whom, his intended victims walked unhurt and undismayed amidst *the furnace heated one seven times more than it was wont to be heated?* Though a spectacle so terrible and sublime is not *now* vouchsafed to mankind, the memorial of it is designed to have the like effect. The endearing and inspiriting lessons of Christianity may be learned by all who will. One who has this faith, hears, amidst perplexity and danger, a voice before him, bidding him to *run with patience the race that is set before him*, and he knows that in due time he will reach the goal. Animated by thoughts such as these, he needs not have resort to such secondary sources of consolation, as the comparison of his own with the greater sufferings of others; it is enough for him that his Master wills him to endure—and *unto the end*—and, while thinking thus, he feels fresh vigour infused into his fainting frame.

To Mr. Aubrey the Sabbath was indeed not only a day for performing the public services of religion, but also a day of real rest from the labours of life. It was not one to him of puritanical gloom or excitement, but of sincere, cheerful, fervent, enlightened devotion. It would have been to the reader, I think, not an uninteresting sight to behold this unfortunate and harassed family at church. They took almost the only pew that was vacant in the gallery—in a church not far distant from Vivian Street—a pew just holding themselves and little Charles, who, since their arrival in town, had begun to accompany them to the morning service. There was something in their appearance—punctual as they were to morning and evening service—that could hardly fail to interest any one who observed them. Two very elegant and lovely women, dressed in simple half-mourning,—he of calm, gentlemanly manners, an intellectual countenance, but overshadowed with deep seriousness, if not melancholy—as, indeed, was the case with the whole of the little group, except the beautiful child, Charles. If their mere appearance was thus calculated to interest those around, who beheld them so punctual in their attendance, how much would that interest have been increased had the beholder possessed an inkling of their singular and melancholy history? Here were individuals, whose con-

dition was testing the reality of the consolations of religion, exhibiting humility, resignation, faith, a deep delight in attending the house of Him who had permitted such dreadful disasters to befall them, and whose will it yet seemed to be that they should pass through deeper sufferings than they had yet experienced. His temple seemed, indeed, to them a refuge and shelter from the storm. To Mr. Aubrey every portion of the church service was precious, for its purity, its simplicity, its solemnity, its fervour, its truly scriptural character, its adaptation to every imaginable condition of feeling and of circumstance, indeed "to all sorts and conditions of men." There was a little circumstance, fraught with much interest, which occurred to them shortly after they had commenced their attendance at the church. An occasional sermon was preached one evening by a stranger, from the words, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*," on behalf of a neighbouring dispensary. Mr. Aubrey was soon struck by the unusual strength and beauty of the sermon in point of composition. Its language was at once chaste, pointed, and forcible; its reasoning clear and cogent; its illustration apt and vivid; its pathos genuine. As he went on, Mr. Aubrey became more and more convinced that he had seen or heard the preacher before; and on inquiring afterwards his name, his impressions proved to be correct;—the preacher had been at Oxford, at the very same college with him, and this was the first time that they had since come within sight of each other. Mr. Aubrey at once introduced himself, and was recognised, and they renewed their early friendship. Mr. Neville, poor soul, had nothing upon earth to support himself with but an afternoon lectureship in one of the city churches, from which he derived about 75*l.* a-year; and on this sum alone he had contrived, for the last six or eight years, to support both himself and his wife,—a very amiable and fond woman. Fortunately they had no children; but they had seen much affliction, each of them being in but middling health, and a great part of his little income was, consequently, devoted to doctors' bills. He was an admirable scholar; a man of very powerful understanding, and deeply read in metaphysics and divinity. Yet this was all he could procure for his support; and very pinch-

ing work for them, poor souls, it was to "make ends meet." They lived in very small but creditable lodgings; and amid all their privations, and with all the gloom of the future before them, they were as cheerful a little couple as the world ever saw. They dearly loved, and would have sacrificed every thing for each other; and so long as they could but keep their chins above water, they cared not for their exclusion from most of the comforts of life. They were, both of them, entirely resigned to the will of Heaven as to their position—nay, in all things. She generally accompanied him whithersoever he went; but on the present occasion the little creature was lying at home in bed, enduring great suffering: and the thought of it made the preacher's heart very heavy, and his voice to falter a little, several times, during his sermon. He was perfectly delighted when Mr. Aubrey introduced himself; and when the latter had heard all his friend's little history—for he had indeed a child-like simplicity and frankness, and told Mr. Aubrey every thing he knew about himself—he wrung his hand with great emotion—almost too great for expression. It seemed that a bishop, before whom poor Neville had accidentally preached seven years before, had sent for him, and expressed such a very high opinion of his sermon, as led him reasonably to look for some little preferment at his lordship's hands, but in vain. Poor Neville had no powerful friends, and the bishop was overwhelmed with applicants for every thing he had to give away; so it is not much to be wondered at that in time he totally lost sight of Mr. Neville, and of the hopes which had blossomed but to be blighted. What touched Mr. Aubrey to the soul, was the unaffected cheerfulness with which poor Mr. Neville—now in his fortieth year—reconciled himself to his unpromising circumstances, the calmness with which he witnessed the door of preferment evidently shut upon him for ever. Mr. Aubrey obtained from him his address; and resolved that, though for reasons long ago mentioned he had withdrawn from almost every one of his former friends and associates, yet with this poor, this neglected but happy clergyman, he would endeavour to renew and cement firmly their early-formed but long-suspended friendship. And when on his return to Vivian Street, (whither Mrs.

and Miss Aubrey had proceeded alone, at his request, while he walked on with Mr. Neville,) he told them the little history which I have above indicated to the reader, how the hearts of all of them went forth towards one who was in many respects a fellow-sufferer with themselves, and, *practising what he preached*, was really a pattern of resignation to the will of God; of humble but hearty faith in His mercy and loving-kindness!

Mr. Aubrey was not long in paying his promised visit to Mr. Neville, accompanied by Mrs. Aubrey. 'Twas a long and not very agreeable walk for them, towards St. George's in the East; and on reaching a small row of neat houses, only one story high, and being shown into Mr. Neville's very little sitting-room, they found Mrs. Neville lying on a sofa near the fire, looking very ill, and Mr. Neville sitting before her with a number of books on the table, and pen, ink, and paper, with which he was occupied preparing his next Sunday's sermon; but there was also a slip of paper on the table of a different description, and which had occasioned both of them great distress; viz. a rather peremptory note from their medical man, touching the payment of his "trifling account" of £14 odds. Where poor Neville was to obtain such a sum, neither he nor his wife knew: they had already almost deprived themselves of necessary food and clothing, to enable them to discharge another account, and this new demand of an old claim had indeed grievously disquieted them. They said nothing about it to Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey, who soon made themselves at home, and by their unaffected simplicity and cordiality of manner, relieved their humble hosts from all anxiety. They partook of tea, in a sufficiently homely and frugal style; and before they rose to go they exacted a promise, that, as soon as Mrs. Neville should have recovered, they would both come and spend a long day in Vivian Street. They soon became very intimate; and, Mrs. Neville's health at length being such as to preclude her from attending at all to her needle, the reader will probably think none the less of Miss Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey, when he hears that they insisted on taking that task upon themselves, (a matter in which they were becoming somewhat expert,) and many and many an hour did these two charming women spend, both in Vivian

Street and at Mrs. Neville's, in relieving her from her labours—particularly in preparing their winter clothing.

And now that I am on this point, I may as well mention another not less amiable trait in Kate; that, hearing of a girl's school about to be founded in connection with the church which they attended, and in support of which several ladies had undertaken to prepare various little matters, such as embroidery, lace, pictures, and articles of fancy and ornament, Kate also set to work with her pencil and brushes. She was a very tasteful draughtswoman; and produced four or five such delicate and beautiful sketches, in water colour, of scenes in and about Yatton, as made her a very distinguished contributor to the undertaking; each of her sketches producing upwards of two guineas. She also drew a remarkably spirited crayon sketch of the pretty little head of Charles—who accompanied her to the place where her contributions were deposited, and delivered it in with his own hand. Thus were this sweet and amiable family rapidly reconciling themselves to their altered circumstances—taking real pleasure in the new scenes which surrounded them, and the novel duties devolving upon them; and as their feelings became calmer, they felt how true it is that happiness in this world depends not merely upon external circumstances, but upon THE MIND—which, contented and well regulated, can turn every thing around it into a source of enjoyment and thankfulness—making indeed the wilderness to bloom and blossom as the rose.

They kept up—especially Kate—a constant correspondence with good old Doctor Tatham; who, judging from the frequency and the length of his letters, which were written with a truly old-fashioned distinctness and uniformity of character, must have found infinite pleasure in his task. So also was it with Kate, who, if she had ever been writing to her lover,—nay, between ourselves, what would Delamere have given to have had addressed to himself one of the long letters, crossed down to the very postscript, full of sparkling delicacy, good nature, and good sense, which so often found their way to the "Rev. Dr. Tatham, Yatton Vicarage, Yorkshire?" They were thus apprised of every thing of moment that transpired at Yatton, to which their feelings clung with unalienable affection. Dr. Tat-

ham's letters had indeed almost always a painful degree of interest attached to them. From his frequent mention of Mr. Gammon's name—and almost equally *favourable* as frequent—it appeared that he possessed a vast ascendancy over Mr. Titmouse, and was, whenever he was at Yatton, in a manner its moving spirit. The Doctor represented Titmouse as a truly wretched creature, with no more sense of religion than a monkey; equally silly, selfish, and vulgar—unfeeling and tyrannical wherever he had an opportunity of exhibiting his real character.

It exquisitely pained them, moreover, to find pretty distinct indications of a sterner and stricter rule being apparent at Yatton, than had ever been known there before, so far as the tenants and villagers were concerned. Rents were now required to be paid with the utmost punctuality; many of them were raised, and harsher terms introduced into their agreements. In Mr. Aubrey's time a distress or an action for rent was literally a thing unheard of in any part of the estate; but nearly a dozen had occurred since the accession of Mr. Titmouse. If this was at the instance of the ruling spirit, Mr. Gammon, he certainly got none of the odium of the proceeding, every letter announcing a resort to those extreme proceedings being expressly authorized by Mr. Titmouse personally; Mr. Gammon, on most of such occasions, putting in a faint word or two in favour of the tenant, but ineffectually. The legal proceedings were always conducted in the name of "Bloodsuck and Son," whose town agents were, "Quirk, Gammon, and Snap;" but *their* names never came under the eye of the defendants! No longer could the poor villagers, and poorer tenants, reckon on their former assistance from the hall in the hour of sickness and distress: cowslip wine, currant wine, elderberry wine, if made, were consumed in the Hall. In short, there was a discontinuance of all those innumerable little endearing courtesies, and charities, and hospitalities, which render a good old country mansion the very *heart* of the neighbourhood. The doctor, in one of his letters, intimated, with a sort of agony, that he had heard it mentioned by the people at the Hall, as probable that Mr. Titmouse—the little Goth—would pull down that noble old relic, the east turreted gateway; but that Mr. Gammon was vehemently opposed to such

a measure ; and that if it were preserved after all, it would be entirely owing to the taste and the influence of that gentleman. Had Dr. Tatham chosen, he could have added a fact that would indeed have saddened his friends—viz., that the old sycamore, which had been preserved at the fond entreaties of Kate, and which was hallowed by so many sad and tender associations, had been long ago removed as a sort of eyesore ; Mr. Gammon had, in fact, directed it to be done ; but he repeatedly expressed to Dr. Tatham, confidentially, his regret at such an act on the part of Titmouse. He could also have told them that there had been a dog-fight in the village, at which Mr. Titmouse was present! Persons were beginning to make their appearance in the village, of a very different description from any that had been seen there in the time of the Aubreys—persons, now and then, of loose, and wild, and reckless characters. Mr. Titmouse would often get up a fight in the village, and reward the victor with five or ten shillings! Then the snug and quiet little "Aubrey Arms" was metamorphosed into the "Titmouse Arms;" and another set up in opposition to it, and called "The Toper's Arms;" and it was really painful to see the increasing trade driven by each of them. They were both full every night, and often during the day also ; and the vigilant, and affectionate, and grieved eye of the good vicar noticed several seats in the church, which had formerly been occupied every Sunday morning and afternoon, to be —empty! In his letters, he considerately sunk the grosser features of Titmouse's conduct, which would have only uselessly grieved and disgusted his beloved correspondents. He informed them, however, from time to time, of the different visiters at the Hall, particularly of the arrival and movements of their magnificent kinsfolk, the Earl of Dreddlington and Lady Cecilia, the Marquis Gants Jaunes de Millefleurs and Mr. Tuft—the novel state and ceremony which had been suddenly introduced there—at which they all ceased reading for a moment, and laughed, well knowing the character of Lord Dreddlington.

At length, some considerable time after Mr. Titmouse's grand visiters had been at the Hall, there came a letter from Dr. Tatham, sent by a private hand, and not reaching Vivian Street till the evening, when they

were sitting together, after dinner as usual, and which contained intelligence that was received in sudden silence, and with looks of astonishment, viz. *that Mr. Titmouse had become the acknowledged suitor of the Lady Cecilia!!* Mr. Aubrey, after a moment's pause, laughed more heartily than they had heard him for many months —getting up, at the same time, and walking once or twice across the room—Mrs. Aubrey and Miss Aubrey gazed at each other for a few moments without speaking a word; and you could not have told whether their fair countenances showed more of amusement or of disgust at the intelligence. "Well! it is as I have often told you, Kate," commenced Mr. Aubrey, after a while, resuming his seat, and addressing his sister with an air of good-humoured raillery; "you've lost your chance—you've held your head so high. Ah, 'tis all over now—and our fair cousin is mistress of Yatton!"

"Indeed, Charles," quoth Kate, earnestly, "I do think it's too painful a subject for a joke."

"Why, Kate!—You must bear it as well"——

"Pho, pho—nonsense, Charles! To be serious—did you ever hear any thing so shocking as pe"——

"Do you mean to tell me, Kate," commenced her brother, assuming suddenly such a serious air as for a moment imposed on his sister, "that to become mistress of dear old Yatton—which was *offered* to you, you know—you would not have consented, when it came to the point, to become—Mrs. *Titmouse?*" For an instant, Kate looked as if she would have made, in the eye of the statuary, an exquisite model of beautiful disdain—provoked by the bare idea even, and put forward, as she knew, in raillery only. "You know, Charles," said she at length, calmly, her features relaxing into a smile, "that if such a wretch had ten thousand Yattons, I would, rather than marry him—oh!"—she shuddered—"spring from Dover cliff into the sea!"

"Ah, Kate, Kate!" exclaimed her brother, with a look of infinite pride and fondness. "Even supposing for a moment that you had no prev"——

"Come, Charles, no more nonsense," said Kate, patting his cheek, and slightly colouring.

"I say, that even if"——

"Only fancy," interrupted Kate, "*Lady Cecilia*—Titmouse! I see her before me now. Well, I protest, it is positively insufferable; I could not have thought that there was a woman in the whole world—why"—she paused, and added laughingly, "how I should like to see their correspondence!"

"What!" said Mrs. Aubrey, with a sly smile, first at her husband, and then at Kate, "as a model for a certain *other* correspondence that I can imagine—eh, Kate?"

"Nonsense, nonsense, Agnes!—what a provoking humour you are both in this evening," interrupted Kate, with a slight pettishness; "what we've heard makes *me* melancholy enough, I assure you!"

"I suppose that about the same time that Lady Cecilia Titmouse goes to court," said her brother, "so will the Honourable Mrs. Dela"——

"If you choose to tease me, Charles, of course I cannot help it," quoth Kate, colouring still more; but it required no *very* great acuteness to detect that the topic was not excessively offensive.

"Mrs. De"——

"Have done, Charles!" said she, rising; and, putting her arm round his neck, she pressed her fair hand on his mouth; but he pushed it aside laughingly.

"Mrs. De—Dela—Delamere," he continued.

"I will finish it for you, Charles," said Mrs. Aubrey, "the Honourable Mr. and Mrs. Delamere."

"What! do *you* turn against me too?" inquired Kate, laughing very good-humouredly.

"I wonder what her stately ladyship's feelings were," said Aubrey, after a pause, "the first time that her elegant and accomplished lover *saluted* her!!"

"Eugh!" exclaimed both Kate and Mrs. Aubrey, in a breath, and with a simultaneous shudder of disgust.

"I dare say, poor old Lord Dreddlington's notion is, that this will be a fine opportunity for bringing about his favourite scheme of *reuniting the families*—Heaven save the mark!" said Mr. Aubrey, just as the twopenny postman's knock at the door was heard; and within a few moments' time the servant brought up stairs a letter addressed to Mr. Aubrey. The very first glance at its contents expelled the smile from his countenance, and

the colour from his cheek; he turned, in fact, so pale, that Mrs. Aubrey and Kate also changed colour—and came and stood, with beating hearts and suddenly suspended breath one on each side of him, looking over the letter while he was reading it. As I intend presently to lay a copy of it before the reader, I shall first state a few circumstances, which will make it appear that this letter may be compared to a shell thrown into a peaceful little citadel, by a skilful, though distant and unseen engineer—in short, I mean Mr. Gammon.

This astute and determined person had long been bent upon securing one object, namely—access to Mr. Aubrey's family circle, for reasons which have been already communicated to the reader. That Mr. Aubrey was, at all events, by no means *anxious* for such a favour, had been long before abundantly manifest to Gammon, and yet not in a way to give him any legitimate or excusable grounds of offence. The Aubreys had, he acknowledged, and especially in their present circumstances, an unquestionable right to receive or reject, as they thought fit, any overtures to acquaintance. Nothing, he felt, could be more unexceptionably courteous than Mr. Aubrey's demeanour; yet it had been such as to satisfy him, that unless he resorted to some means of unusual efficacy, he never could get upon visiting terms with the Aubreys. The impression which Miss Aubrey had originally produced in his mind, remained as distinct and vivid as ever. Her beauty, her grace, her elevated character, (of which he had heard much on all hands,) her accomplishments, her high birth—all were exquisitely appreciated by him, and conspired to constitute a prize, for the gaining of which he deemed no exertion too great, no enterprise too hazardous. He had, moreover, other most important objects in view, to which a union with Miss Aubrey, was in fact, essential. She was, again, the only person, the sight of whom had in any measure given vitality to his marble heart, exciting totally new thoughts and desires, such as stimulated him to a fierce and inflexible determination to succeed in his purposes. He was, in short, prepared to make almost any sacrifice, to wait any length of time, to do or suffer any thing that man could do or suffer, whether derogatory to his personal honour or not—in order either to secure the affections of

Miss Aubrey, or, at all events, her consent to a union with him. Having early discovered the spot where Mr. Aubrey had fixed his residence, Mr. Gammon had made a point of lying in wait on a Sunday morning, for the purpose of discovering the church to which they went; and having succeeded, he became a constant, an impassioned, though an unseen observer of Miss Aubrey; from whom he seldom removed his eyes during the service. But this was to him a highly unsatisfactory state of things: he seemed, in fact, not to have made, nor to be likely to make, the least progress towards the accomplishment of his wishes, though much time had already passed away. He was so deeply engrossed with the affairs of Titmouse —which required his presence very frequently at Yatton, and a great deal of his attention in town—as to prevent his taking any decisive steps for some time in the matter nearest his heart. At length, not having seen or heard any thing of Mr. Aubrey for some weeks, during which he—Gammon—had been in town, he resolved on a new stroke of policy.

"Mr. Quirk," said he one day to his excellent senior partner, "I fancy you will say that I am come to flatter you; but, Heaven knows! if there *is* a man on the earth with whom I lay aside disguise, that man is my friend Mr. Quirk. Really it does seem, and mortifying enough it is to own it, as if events invariably showed that you are right—and I wrong,"—(Here Mr. Quirk's appearance might have suggested the idea of a great old tomcat who is rubbed down the right way of the fur, and does every thing he can to testify the delight it gives him by pressing against the person who affords him such gratification,)— "especially in financial matters"——

"Ah, Gammon, Gammon! you're really past finding out!—Sometimes, now, I declare I fancy you the very keenest dog going in such matters, and at other times, eh?—not *particularly* brilliant. When you've seen as much of this world's villany, Gammon, as I have, you'll find it as necessary as I have found it, to lay aside one's —one's—I say, to lay aside all scrup—that is,—I mean, —one's *fine feelings*, and so forth: you understand, Gammon?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Quirk"——

"Well—and may I ask, Gammon, what is the particular occasion of that screwed-up forehead of yours? Something in the wind?"

"Only this, Mr. Quirk—I begin to suspect that I did very wrong in recommending you to give an indefinite time to that Mr. Aubrey for payment of the heavy balance he owes us—by heavens!—see how coolly he treats us!"

"Indeed, Gammon, I think so!—Besides,—*'tis* an uncommon heavy balance to owe so long, eh?—Fifteen hundred pounds, or thereabouts?—'Gad! it's *that*, at least!"—Gammon shrugged his shoulders, and bowed, as resigned to any step which Mr. Quirk might think proper to take.

"He's a villanous proud fellow that Aubrey, eh?—Your swell debtors generally *are*, though—when they've got a bit of a hardship to harp upon"——

"Certainly we ought, when we had him in our power"——

"Ah!—D'ye recollect, Gammon? the *thumbscrew?* eh? whose fault was it that it wasn't put on? eh? Tell me that, friend Gammon! Are you coming round to old Caleb Quirk's matter-of-fact way of doing business? Depend on't the old boy has got a trick or two left in him yet, gray as his hair's grown."

"I bow, my dear sir,—I own myself worsted,—and all through that absurd weakness I have, which some choose to call——"

"Oh Lord, Gammon! Bubble, bubble and botheration, ah, ha!—Come, there's nobody here but you and me—and—eh! *old Bogy* perhaps—so why that little bit of blarney?"

"Oh, my dear Mr. Quirk, spare me that cutting irony of yours. Surely when I have made the sincere and humiliating submission to which you have been listening,—but to return to business. I assure you that I think we ought to lose not a moment in getting in our balance or at least coming to some satisfactory and definite arrangement concerning it. Only pinch him, and he'll bleed freely, depend on it."

"Ah, ha! Pinch him, and he'll bleed! That's *my* thunder, Gammon, ah, ha, ha!—By Jove! that's it to a

T !—I always thought the fellow had blood enough in him if we only squeezed him a little—so let Snap be off and have a writ out against Master Aubrey."

"Forgive me, my dear Mr. Quirk," interrupted Gammon, blandly—"we must go very cautiously to work, or we shall only injure ourselves, and prejudice our most important—and *permanent* interest. We must take care not to drive him desperate, poor devil, or he may take the benefit of the act, and"——

"What a cursed scamp he would be to"——

"Certainly; but *we* should suffer more than he"——

"Surely, Gammon, they'd *remand* him! Eighteen months at the very least."

"Not an hour—not a minute, Mr. Quirk," said Gammon, very earnestly.

"The deuce they wouldn't! Well! Law's come to a pretty point! And so lenient as we've been!"

"What occurs to *me* as the best method of procedure," said Gammon, after musing for a moment—"is for you to write a letter to him immediately—civil but peremptory—just one of those letters of yours, my dear sir, in which no man living can excel you—*suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, Mr. Quirk."

"Gammon, you're a gentleman, every inch of you—you are, upon my soul! If there *is* one thing in which I——but *you're* a hand at a letter of that sort, too! And *you* have managed these people hitherto; why not go on to the end of the chapter?"

"Mr. Quirk, I look upon this letter as rather an important one—it ought to come from the head of the firm, and to be decisively and skilfully expressed, so as at once to——eh? But you know exactly what ought to be done."

"Well—leave it to me,—leave it to me, Gammon: I think I *do* know how to draw up a teazer—egad! You can just cast your eye over it as soon as"——

"If I return in time from Clerkenwell, I will, Mr. Quirk," replied Gammon, who had, however, determined not to disable himself from saying with literal truth that he had not seen one line of the letter which might be sent! and, moreover, resolving to make his appearance at Mr. Aubrey's almost immediately after he should, in the course

of the post, have received Mr. Quirk's letter—with every appearance and *expression* of distress, agitation, and even disgust; indignantly assuring Mr. Aubrey that the letter had been sent without Mr. Gammon's knowledge—against his will—and was entirely repudiated by him; and that he would take care, at all hazards to himself, to frustrate any designs on the part of his coarse and hardhearted senior partner to harass or oppress Mr. Aubrey. With this explanation of precedent circumstances, I proceed to lay before the reader an exact copy of that old cat's-paw, Mr. Quirk's letter to Mr. Aubrey, the arrival of which had produced the sensation already intimated.

"Saffron Hill, 30th September, 18—.

"Sir—We trust you will excuse our reminding you of the very large ballance (£1446, 14s. 6d.) still remaining due upon our account—and which we understood, at the time when the very favourable arrangement to you, with respect to Mr. Titmouse, was made, was to have been long before this liquidated. Whatever allowances we might have felt disposed, on account of your peculiar situation, to have made, (and which we *have* made,) we cannot but feel a little surprised at your having allowed several months to elapse without making any allusion thereto. We are satisfied, however, that you require only to be reminded thereof, to have your immediate attention directed thereto, and to act in that way that will conduce to liquidate our very heavy ballance against you. We are sorry to have to press you; but being much pressed ourselves with serious outlays, we are obliged to throw ourselves (however reluctantly) upon our resources; and it gives us pleasure to anticipate that you must by this time have made those arrangements that will admit of your immediate attention to our over-due account, and that will render unnecessary our resorting to hostile and compulsory proceedings of that extremely painful description that we have always felt extremely reluctant to, particularly with those gentlemen that would feel it very disagreeable. We trust that in a week's time we shall hear from you to that effect that will render unnecessary our proceeding to extremities against you, which would

be extremely painful to us. I remain, sir, yours, most obediently,

"CALEB QUIRK.

"CHARLES AUBREY, ESQ.

"P. S.—We should have no objection, if it would materially relieve you, to take your note of hand for the aforesaid ballance (£1446 14s. 6d.) at two months, with interest, and good security. Or say, £800 down in two months, and a *warrant of attorney* for the remainder, at two months more."

As soon as all three of them had finished reading the above letter, in the way I have described, Mrs. Aubrey threw her arms round her silent and oppressed husband's neck, and Kate, her bosom heaving with agitation, returned to her seat, without uttering a word.

"My darling Charles!" faltered Mrs. Aubrey, and wept.

"Never mind, Charles—let us hope that we shall get through even *this*," commenced Kate; when her emotion prevented her proceeding. Mr. Aubrey appeared to cast his eye again, but mechanically only, over the dry, civil, heart-breaking letter.

"Don't distress yourself, my Agnes," said he, tenderly, placing her beside him, with his arm round her—"it is only reasonable that these people should ask for what is their own; and if their manner is a little coarse"——

"Oh, I've no patience, Charles!—It's the letter of a vulgar, hardhearted fellow," sobbed Mrs. Aubrey.

"Yes—they are wretches!—cruel harpies!" quoth Kate, passionately, wiping her eyes—"they know that you have almost beggared yourself to pay off by far the greater part of their abominable bill; and that you are slaving day and night to enable you to"——here her agitation was so excessive as to prevent her uttering another word.

"I must write and tell them," said Aubrey calmly, but with a countenance laden with gloom—"it is all I can do—but if they will *have patience with me, I will pay them all.*"

"Oh, they'll put you in prison, Charles, directly,"—said Kate passionately; and rising, she threw herself into his arms, and kissed him with a sort of frantic energy.

"We're *very* miserable, Charles—are not we? It's very hard to bear indeed,"—she continued, gazing with agonizing intensity on his troubled features. Mrs. Aubrey wept in silence.

"Are you giving way, my brave Kate, with this sudden and momentary gust on the midnight sea of our trouble?" inquired her brother, proudly but kindly gazing at her, and with his hand gently pushing from her pale cheeks her disordered hair.

"Human nature, Charles, must not be tried too far,—look at Agnes, the darling little loves"—

"I am not likely to consult their interests, Kate, by yielding to unmanly emotion,—am I, sweet Agnes?" She made him no reply, but shook her head, sobbing bitterly.

"Pray what do you think, Charles, of your friend *Mr. Gammon*, now?" inquired Kate, suddenly and scornfully. "Oh, the smooth-tongued villain! I've always hated him!"

"I must say there's something about his eye that is any thing but pleasing," said Mrs. Aubrey; "and so I thought when I saw him at York for a moment."

"He's a hypocrite, Charles—depend upon it; and in this letter he has thrown off the mask"—interrupted Kate.

"*Is* it *his* letter? How do we know that he has had any thing to do with it?" inquired her brother, calmly—"It is much more probable that it is the production of old Mr. Quirk alone, for whom Mr. Gammon has, I know, a profound contempt. The handwriting is Mr. Quirk's; the style is assuredly not Mr. Gammon's, and the whole tone of the letter is such as makes me confident that neither was the composition of the letter, nor the idea of sending it, his; besides, he has really shown on every occasion a straightforward and disinterested"——

"Oh, Charles, it is very weak of you to be taken with such a man; he's a *horrid* fellow—I can't bear to think of him! One of these days, Charles, you'll be of my opinion!"—whilst she thus spoke, and whilst Mrs. Aubrey was, with a trembling hand, preparing tea, a double knock was heard at the street door.

"Gracious, Charles! who can that possibly be, and at this time of night?" exclaimed Kate, with alarmed energy.

"I really cannot conjecture," replied Mr. Aubrey, with

no little agitation of manner, which he found it impossible to conceal,—"we've certainly but very few visiters, and so late." The servant in a few minutes terminated their suspense, and occasioned them nearly equal alarm and amazement, by laying down on the table a card bearing the name of MR. GAMMON.

"Mr. Gammon!" exclaimed all three in a breath, looking apprehensively at each other—"Is he *alone?*" inquired Mr. Aubrey, with forced calmness.

"Yes, sir."

"Show him into the parlour, then," replied Mr. Aubrey, "and say I will be with him in a few moments' time."

"Dear Charles, don't, dearest, think of going down," said his wife and sister, with excessive alarm and agitation; "desire him to send up his message."

"No, I shall go and see him, and at once," replied Mr. Aubrey, taking one of the candles.

"For heaven's sake, Charles, mind what you say to the man; he will watch every word you utter. And, dearest, don't stay long; consider what tortures we shall be in!" said poor Mrs. Aubrey, accompanying him to the door.

"Rely on my prudence, and also that I shall not stop long," he replied; and descending the stairs, he entered the study. In a chair near the little book-strewn table sat his dreaded visiter, who instantly, on seeing Mr. Aubrey, rose, with distress and agitation visible in his countenance and deportment. Mr. Aubrey, with calmness and dignity, begged him to resume his seat; and when he had done so, sat down opposite to him, with a sternly inquisitive look, awaiting his visiter's errand, who did not keep him long in suspense. For—"Oh, Mr. Aubrey!" commenced Mr. Gammon, with a somewhat tremulous voice, "I perceive, from your manner, that my fears are justified, and that I am an intruder—a dishonourable and hypocritical one I must indeed appear; but, as one gentleman with another, I request you to hear me. This visit appears indeed unreasonable; but, late this afternoon, I made a discovery which has shocked me severely, nay, I may say, disgusted me beyond expression. Am I right, Mr. Aubrey, in supposing that this evening

you have received a letter from Mr. Quirk, and about the balance due on our account?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Aubrey, coldly.

"I thought as much," muttered Gammon, with suppressed vehemence—"execrable, heartless, sordid old—And he *knew*," continued Gammon, addressing Mr. Aubrey in an indignant tone, "that my word was pledged to you that it should be long before you were troubled about the business."

"I have nothing to complain of, sir," said Mr. Aubrey, eyeing his agitated companion (who *felt* that he was) searchingly.

"But I have, Mr. Aubrey," said Gammon, haughtily. "My senior partner has broken faith with me. Sir, you have already paid more than will cover what is justly due to us; and I recommend you, after this, to *have the bill taxed.* I do, sir, and thereby you will get rid of every farthing of the balance now demanded." Notwithstanding the air of sincerity with which this was uttered, a cold thrill of apprehension and suspicion passed through Mr. Aubrey's heart, and he felt confident that some subtle and dangerous manœuvre was being practised upon him—some hostile step urged upon him, for instance—which would be unsuccessful, and yet afford a pretext to Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap to treat him as one guilty of a breach of faith, and warrant them in proceeding to extremities.

"I have no intention, sir, to do any thing of the kind," said he—"the original agreement between us was, that your bill should not be taxed. I adhere to it; and whatever course you may feel disposed to take, I shall take no steps whatever of the kind you mention. At the same time, it is utterly impossible for me to pay"—

"Mr. Aubrey!" interrupted Gammon, imploringly.

"And what you intend to do, for Heaven's sake, sir, do quickly, and do not keep me in suspense."

"I perceive, Mr. Aubrey, that I am distrusted," said Gammon, with a somewhat proud and peremptory tone and manner. "I excuse it; you are justly irritated, and have been insulted: so have I, too, sir; and I choose to tell you, upon my sacred word of honour as a gentleman,

that I entirely disown and scout this whole procedure; that I never knew any thing about it till, accidentally, I discovered lying on Mr. Quirk's desk, after his departure this evening from the office, a rough draft of a letter which I presumed you had received, especially as, on a strict inquiry of the clerks, I found that a letter had been put into the post, addressed to you. Nay, more; Mr. Quirk, whose rapacity increases, I am shocked to own—inversely with his years—has been for many weeks harassing me about this detestable business, and urging me to consent, but in vain, to such an application as he has now meanly made behind my back, regardless of the injury it was calculated to do my feelings, and, indeed, the doubt it must throw over my sincerity and honour. Only a fortnight ago, he solemnly pledged himself never to mention the matter to either me or you again, for at least a couple of years, unless something extraordinary should intervene. If the letter you have received is a transcript of the rough draft which I have read, it is a vulgar, unfeeling letter, and contains two or three wilfully false statements. I therefore feel it due to myself to disavow all participation in this truly unworthy affair; and if you still distrust me, I can only regret it, but shall not presume to find fault with you for it. I am half disposed, on account of this, and one or two other things which have happened, to close my connection with Mr. Quirk from this day—for ever. He and I have nothing in common; and the kind of business which he prefers is perfectly odious to me. But if I should continue in the firm, I will undertake to supply you with one pretty conclusive evidence of my sincerity and truth in what I have been saying to you——namely, that on the faith and honour of a gentleman, you may depend upon hearing no more on this matter from any member of our firm. Let the *event*, Mr. Aubrey, speak for itself."—While Gammon was speaking, with great earnestness and fervour, he had felt Mr. Aubrey's eye fixed on him with an expression of stern incredulity which, however, he at length perceived, with infinite inward relief and pleasure, to be giving way as he went on.

"Certainly, Mr. Gammon"—said Mr. Aubrey, when Gammon had ceased—"the letter you have mentioned, has occasioned me—and my family—very great distress:

for it is utterly out of my power to comply with its requisitions: and if it be intended to be really acted on, and followed up"—he paused, and successfully concealed his emotion, "all my little plans are for ever frustrated—and I am at your mercy to go to prison, if you choose, and there end my days."—He paused—his lips trembled, and his eyes were for a moment obscured with starting tears. So also was it with Mr. Gammon. "But,"—resumed Mr. Aubrey,—"after the explicit and voluntary assurance which you have given me, I feel it impossible not to believe you entirely. I can imagine no motive for what would be otherwise such elaborate deception."

"*Motive*, Mr. Aubrey? The only motive I am conscious of is, one resting on profound sympathy for your misfortunes—admiration of your character—and aiming at your speedy extrication from your very serious embarrassment. I am in the habit, Mr. Aubrey," he continued, in a lower tone, "of concealing and checking my feelings—but there *are* occasions"—he paused, and added with a somewhat faltering voice—"Mr. Aubrey, it pains me inexpressibly to observe that your anxieties—your severe exertions—I trust in God I may not rightly add, your *privations*—are telling on your appearance. You are certainly much thinner." It was impossible any longer to distrust the sincerity of Mr. Gammon—to withstand the arts of this consummate actor. Mr. Aubrey held out long, but at length surrendered entirely, and yielded implicit credence to all that Gammon had said—entertaining, moreover, commensurate feelings of gratitude towards one who had done so much to protect him from rapacious avarice, and the ruin into which it would have precipitated him; and of respect for one who had evinced such an anxious, scrupulous, and sensitive jealousy for his own honour and reputation, and resolute determination to vindicate it against suspicion. Subsequent conversation served to strengthen his favourable disposition towards Gammon, and the same effect was also produced when he adverted to his previous and unwarrantable distrust and disbelief of that gentleman. He looked fatigued and harassed; it was growing late; he had come on his errand of courtesy and kindness, a great distance: why should not Mr. Aubrey ask him up stairs, to join them at tea? To be sure Mr. Aubrey had

hitherto felt a disinclination—he scarce knew why—to have any more than mere business intercourse with Mr. Gammon, a member of such a firm as Quirk, Gammon, and Snap—and, moreover, Mr. Runnington had more than once let fall expressions indicative of vehement distrust of Mr. Gammon; so had the Attorney-General; but what had Gammon's *conduct* been? Had it not practically given the lie to such insinuations and distrust, unless Mr. Aubrey was to own himself incapable of forming a judgment on a man's line of conduct which had been so closely watched as that of Gammon by himself, Aubrey? Then Miss Aubrey had ever, and especially that very evening—expressed a vehement dislike of Mr. Gammon—avowed, also, her early and uniform distrust—'twould be extremely embarrassing to her suddenly to introduce into her presence such an individual as Gammon: again, he had promised to return quickly, in order to relieve their anxiety: why should he not have the inexpressible gratification of letting Mr. Gammon himself, in his own pointed and impressive manner, dispel all their fears? He would, probably, not stay long.

"Mr. Gammon," said he, having balanced for some minutes these conflicting considerations in his mind—"there are only Mrs. Aubrey and my sister up stairs. I am sure they will be happy to see me return to them in time for tea, accompanied by the bearer of such agreeable tidings as yours. For Mr. Quirk's letter, to be frank, reached me when in their presence, and we all read it together, and were dreadfully disturbed at its contents." After a faint show of reluctance to trespass on the ladies so suddenly and at so late an hour, Mr. Gammon slipped off his great-coat, and with secret but suppressed feelings of exultation at the success of his scheme, followed Mr. Aubrey up stairs. He felt not a little fluttered on entering the room and catching a first glimpse of the two lovely women—and one of them *Miss Aubrey*—sitting in it, their faces turned with eager interest and anxiety towards the door as he made his appearance. He observed that both of them started, and turned exceedingly pale.

"Let me introduce to you," said Mr. Aubrey, quickly, and with a bright assuring smile, "a gentleman who has kindly called to relieve us all from great anxiety—Mr.

Gammon: Mr. Gammon, Mrs. Aubrey—Miss Aubrey." He bowed with an air of deep deference, but easy self-possession; his soul thrilling within him at the sight of her whose image had never been from before his eyes since they had first seen her.

"I shall trespass on you for only a few minutes, ladies," said he, approaching the chair towards which he was motioned. "I could not resist the opportunity so politely afforded me by Mr. Aubrey of paying my compliments here, and personally assuring you of my utter abhorrence of the mercenary and oppressive conduct of a gentleman with whom, alas! I am closely connected in business, and whose letter to you of this evening I only casually became acquainted with a few moments before starting off hither. Forget it ladies; I pledge my honour that it shall *never be acted on!*" This he said with a fervour of manner that could not but make an impression on those whom he addressed.

"I'm sure we're happy to see you, Mr. Gammon, and very much obliged to you, indeed," said Mrs. Aubrey, with a sweet smile, and a face from which alarm was vanishing fast. Miss Aubrey said nothing: her brilliant eyes glanced with piercing anxiety, now at her brother, then at his companion. Gammon felt that he was distrusted. Nothing could be more prepossessing—more bland and insinuating, without a trace of fulsomeness, than Mr. Gammon's manner and address, as he took his seat between Mrs. Aubrey and Miss Aubrey, whose paleness rather suddenly gave way to a vivid and beautiful flush; and her eyes presently sparkled with delighted surprise on perceiving the relieved air of her brother, and the apparent cordiality and sincerity of Mr. Gammon. When she reflected, moreover, on her expressions of harshness and severity concerning him that very evening, and of which he now appeared so undeserving, it threw into her manner towards him a sort of delicate and charming embarrassment. Her ear drank in eagerly every word he uttered—so pointed, so significant, so full of earnest goodwill towards her brother. His manner was that of a gentleman, his countenance and conversation that of a man of intellect,—was *this* the keen and cruel pettifogger whom she had learned at once to dread and to despise? They

and he were, in a word, completely at their ease with one another, within a few minutes after he had taken his seat at the tea-table. Miss Aubrey's beauty shone that evening with even unwonted lustre, and appeared as if it had not been in the least impaired by the anguish of mind which she had so long suffered. 'Tis quite impossible for me to do justice to the expression of her full blooming blue eyes —an expression of mingled passion and intellect—of blended softness and spirit, that, especially in conjunction with the rich tones of her voice, shed something like madness into the breast of Gammon. She, as well as her lovely sister-in-law was dressed in mourning, which infinitely set off her dazzling complexion, and, simple and elegant in its drapery, displayed her exquisite proportions to the greatest possible advantage. "Oh, my God!" thought Gammon, with a momentary thrill of disgust and horror; "and this is the transcendent creature of whom that little miscreant, Titmouse, spoke to me in terms of such presumptuous and revolting license!" What would he not have given to kiss the fair and delicate white hand that passed to him his tea-cup! Then Gammon's thoughts turned for a moment inward—*why, what a scoundrel was he!* At that instant he was, as it were, reeking with his recent lie. He was there on cruel, false pretences, which alone had secured him access into that little drawing-room, and brought him into contiguity with the dazzling beauty beside him—pure and innocent as beautiful;—he was a fiend beside an angel. What an execrable hypocrite was he!

He caught on that memorable occasion, a sudden glimpse even of his own infernal SELFISHNESS—a sight that gave him a cold shudder. Then, was he not in the presence of his *victims?*—of those whom he was fast pressing on to the verge of destruction—to whom he was, at that moment, meditating profound and subtle schemes of mischief! At length they all got into animated conversation. He was infinitely struck and charmed by the unaffected simplicity and frankness of their manners, yet he felt a sad and painful consciousness of not having made the least way with them; though physically near to them, he seemed yet really at an unapproachable distance from them, and particularly from Miss Aubrey. He felt that the courtesy bestowed upon him was acci-

dental, the result merely of his present position, and of the intelligence which he had come to communicate; it was not *personal*—'twas nothing to *Gammon himself;* it would never be renewed, unless he should renew his device. There was not the faintest semblance of *sympathy* between them and him. Fallen as they were into a lower sphere, they had yet about them, so to speak, a certain atmosphere of conscious personal consequence, derived from high birth and breeding—from superior feelings and associations—from a native frankness and dignity of character, which was indestructible and inalienable, which chilled and checked undue advances of any sort. They were still the Aubreys of Yatton, and he, in their presence, still Mr. Gammon of the firm of Quirk, Gammon, and Snap, of Saffron Hill—and all this on the part of the Aubreys without the least effort, the least intention, or consciousness. No, there had not been exhibited towards him the faintest indication of hauteur. On the contrary, he had been treated with perfect cordiality and frankness. Yet, dissatisfaction and vexation were, he scarce knew at the moment why, completely *flooding* him. Had he accurately analyzed his own feelings, he would have discovered the real cause to have been—*his own unreasonable, unjustifiable wishes and intentions.* They talked of Titmouse, and his mode of life and conduct—of his expected alliance with the Lady Cecilia, at the mention of which Gammon's quick eye detected a passing smile of scorn on Miss Aubrey's countenance, that was death to all his own fond and ambitious hopes.

After he had been sitting with them for scarcely an hour, he detected Miss Aubrey stealthily glancing at her watch, and at once arose to take his departure, with a very easy and graceful air, expressing an apprehension that he had trespassed upon their kindness. He was cordially assured to the contrary, but invited, neither to prolong his stay, nor renew his visit. Miss Aubrey made him, he thought, as he inclined towards her, *rather* a formal courtesy; and the tone of voice—soft and silvery—in which she said "good-night, Mr. Gammon," fell on his eager ear, and sunk into his vexed heart, like music. On quitting the house, a deep sigh of disappointment escaped him. As he gazed for a moment with longing eyes at the

windows of the room in which Miss Aubrey was sitting, he felt profound depression of spirit; he had altogether *failed;* and he had a sort of cursed consciousness that he deserved to fail, on every account. Her image was before his mind's eye every moment while he was threading his way back to his chambers at Thavies' Inn; he sat for an hour or two before the remnant of his fire, lost in a revery; and sleep came not to his eyes till a late hour in the morning. Just as his tortuous mind was losing hold of its sinister purpose in sleep, Mr. Aubrey might have been seen taking his seat in his little study, having spent a restless night. 'Twas little more than half-past four o'clock when he entered, candle in hand, the scene of his early and cheerful labours, and took his seat before his table covered with loose manuscripts and books. His face was certainly overcast with anxiety, but his soul was calm and resolute. Having lit his fire, he placed his candle on the table, and leaning back for a moment in his chair, while the flickering increasing light of his crackling fire and candle, revealed to him, with a sense of snugness, his shelves crammed with books, and the window covered with an ample crimson curtain, effectually excluding the chill morning air—he reflected with a heavy sigh upon the precarious tenure by which he held the little comforts that were yet left to him. Oh! —thought he—if Heaven were but to relieve me from the frightful pressure of liability under which I am bound to the earth, what labour, what privation would I repine at! What gladness would not spring up in my heart! But rousing himself from vain thoughts of this kind, he began to arrange his manuscripts, when his ear caught a sound on the stair—'twas the light step of his sister, coming down to perform her promised undertaking—not an unusual one by any means—to transcribe for the press the manuscript he was about completing that morning. "My sweet Kate," said he tenderly, as she entered with her little chamber light, which she extinguished as she entered—"I am really grieved to see you stirring so early—go back to bed." But she kissed his cheek affectionately, and refused to do any such thing; and telling him of the restless night she had passed, of which indeed her pale and depressed features bore but too legible evidence, she

sat herself down in her accustomed place, nearly opposite to him, cleared away space enough for her little desk, and then opening it, was presently engaged in her delightful task—for to her it *was* indeed delightful—of copying out her brother's composition.

Thus she sat, silent and industrious—scarce opening her lips, except to ask him to explain an illegible word or so, till the hour had arrived—eight o'clock—for the close of their morning toil. The reader will be pleased to hear that the article on which they had been engaged—and which was on a question of foreign politics, of great difficulty and importance—produced him a cheque for sixty guineas, and excited very general attention and admiration. Oh, how precious was this reward of his honourable and severe toil! How it cheered him who had earned it, and those who were, alas! entirely dependent upon his noble exertions! And how sensibly it augmented their little means! Grateful, indeed, were all of them for the success which had attended his labours!

As I do not intend to occupy the reader with any details relating to Mr. Aubrey's Temple avocations, I shall content myself with saying, that the more Mr. Weasel and Mr. Aubrey came to know of each other, the more Aubrey respected his legal knowledge and ability, and he, Aubrey's intellectual energy and successful application, which, indeed, consciously brought home to Aubrey its own reward, in the daily acquisition of solid learning, and increasing facility in the use of it. His mind was formed for things, and was not apt to occupy itself with mere words, or technicalities. He was ever in quest of the principles of law, its reason, and spirit. He quickly began to appreciate the sound practical good sense on which almost all the rules of law are founded, and the effectual manner in which they are accommodated to the innumerable and ever-varying exigencies of human affairs. The mere forms and technicalities of the law, Mr. Aubrey often compared to short-hand, whose characters to the uninitiated appear quaint and useless, but are perfectly invaluable to him who has seen the object, and patiently acquired the use of them.

Whatever Mr. Aubrey's hand found to do, while studying the law, he did it, indeed, with his might—which is

the grand secret of the difference in the success of different persons addressing themselves to legal studies. Great or small, easy or difficult, simple or complicated, interesting or uninteresting, he made a point of mastering it thoroughly, and, as far as possible, *by his own efforts;* which generated early a habit of self-reliance which no one better than he knew the value of—how inestimable, how indispensable not to the lawyer merely, but to any one entrusted with the responsible management of affairs. In short, he had all the success which is sure to attend the exertions of a man of superior sense and spirit, who is in earnest in what he is about. He frequently surprised Mr. Weasel with the exactness and extent of his legal information—his acuteness, clear-headedness, and tenacity in dealing with matters of downright difficulty—and Mr. Weasel had several times, in consultation, an opportunity of expressing his very flattering opinion concerning Mr. Aubrey to the Attorney-General. The mention of that eminent person reminds me of an observation which I intended to have made some time ago. The reader is not to imagine, from my silence upon the subject, that Mr. Aubrey, in his fallen fortunes, was heartlessly forgotten or neglected by the distinguished friends and associates of former and more prosperous days. It was not they that withdrew from him, but he that withdrew from them; and that, too, of set purpose, resolutely adhered to, on the ground that it could not be otherwise, without seriously interfering with the due prosecution of those plans of life on which were dependent not only his all, and that of those connected with him—but his fond hopes of yet extricating himself, by his own personal exertions, from the direful difficulties and dangers which at present environed him—of achieving, with his own right hand, independence.

The Attorney-General frequently called to inquire how he was getting on; and, let me not forget here to state a fact which I conceive infinitely to redound to poor Aubrey's honour—viz. that he thrice refused offers made him from very high quarters, of considerable *sinecures, i. e.* handsome salaries for purely nominal services—which he was earnestly and repeatedly reminded would at once afford him a liberal maintenance, and leave the whole of

his time at his own disposal, to follow any pursuit or profession which he chose. Mr. Aubrey justly considered that it was very difficult, if not indeed impossible, for any honourable and high-minded man to be a sinecurist. He that holds a sinecure, in my opinion, is plundering the public; and how it is less contrary to the dictates of honour and justice, deliberately to defraud an individual, than deliberately and openly to defraud that collection of individuals called the public, let casuists determine.

As for Mr. Aubrey, he saw stretching before him the clear, straight, bright line of honour, and he resolved to follow it, without faltering or wavering, come what come might. He resolved, with the blessing of Providence, that his own exertions should procure his bread, and if such was the will of Heaven, lead him to distinction among mankind. He had formed this determination, and resolved to work it out—never to pause or give way, but to die in the struggle. Such a spirit must conquer, whatever is opposed to it. What is *difficulty?* Only a word indicating the degree of strength requisite for accomplishing particular objects; a mere notice of the necessity for exertion; a bugbear to children and fools; only a mere stimulus to men.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Gammon felt very little difficulty in putting off Mr. Quirk from his purpose of enforcing the payment by Mr. Aubrey of the balance of his account; in demonstrating to him the policy of waiting a little longer. He pledged himself, when the proper time came, to adopt measures of undoubted efficacy,—assuring his sullen senior in a low tone, that since his letter had reached Mr. Aubrey, circumstances had occurred which would render it in the last degree dangerous to press the gentleman upon the subject. What that was which had happened, Mr. Gammon, as usual, refused to state. This was a considerable source of vexation to the old gentleman: but he had a far greater one, in the decisive and final overthrow of his fondly cherished hopes concerning his daughter's alliance with Titmouse.

The paragraph in the "Aurora," announcing Mr. Titmouse's engagement to his brilliant relative, the Lady Cecilia, had emanated from the pen of Mr. Gammon, who had had several objects in view in giving early publicity to the event he announced in such courtly terms. *Happening* on the morning on which it appeared to be glancing over the fascinating columns of the *Aurora*, at a public office, (the paper taken in at their own establishment being the *Morning Growl*,) he made a point of purchasing that day's *Aurora;* and on returning to Saffron Hill, he inquired whether Mr. Quirk were at home. Hearing that he was sitting alone, in his room,—in rushed Mr. Gammon, breathless with surprise and haste, plucking the paper out of his pocket,—"By heavens, Mr. Quirk!"—he almost gasped as he doubled down the paper to the place where

stood the announcement in question, and put it into Mr. Quirk's hands,—"this young fellow's given you the slip, after all! See!—The moment that my back is turned"——

Mr. Quirk having with a little trepidation adjusted his spectacles, perused the paragraph with a somewhat flushed face. He had, in fact, for some time had grievous misgivings on the subject of his chance of becoming the father-in-law of his distinguished client, Mr. Titmouse; but now his faintest glimmering of hope was suddenly and completely extinguished, and the old gentleman felt quite desolate. He looked up, on finishing the paragraph, and gazed rather ruefully at his indignant and sympathizing companion.

"It seems all up, Gammon, certainly—don't it?" said he, with a flustered air.

"Indeed, my dear sir, it does! You have my sincerest"——

"Now, come, t'other end of the thing, Gammon! You know every promise of marriage has two ends—one joins the heart, and t'other the pocket; *out* heart, *in* pocket—so have at him, by Jove!" He rose up and rubbed his hands as he stood before the fire. "Breach of promise—thundering damages—devilish deep purse—special jury—broken heart, and all that! I wish he'd written her more letters! Adad, I'll have a shot at him by next assizes—a writ on the file this very day! What d'ye think on't, friend Gammon, between ourselves?"

"Why, my dear sir—to tell you the truth—ar'n't you really well out of it? He's a miserable little upstart—he'd have made a wretched husband for so superior a girl as Miss Quirk."

"Ah—ay! ay! She *is* a good girl, Gammon—there you're right; would have made the best of wives—my eyes, (between ourselves!) how that'll go to the jury! Gad, I fancy I see 'em—perhaps all of 'em daughters of their own."

"Looking at the thing calmly, Mr. Quirk," said Gammon gravely—apprehensive of Mr. Quirk's carrying too far so very absurd an affair—"where's the *evidence* of the promise? Because, you know, there's certainly *something* depends on that—eh?"

"Evidence? Deuce take you, Gammon! where are your wits? Evidence? Lots—lots of it! Ain't there I—her father? Ain't I a competent witness? Wait and see old Caleb Quirk get into the box. I'll settle his hash in half a minute."

"Yes—if you're believed, perhaps."

"*Believe* be ——! Who's to be believed, if her own father isn't?"

"Why, you may be too much swayed by your feelings!"

"*Feelings* be ——! It's past all that; he has none—so he must pay, for he *has* cash! He ought to be made an example of!"

"Still, to come to the point, Mr. Quirk, I vow it quite *teases* me—this matter of the evidence"——

"Evidence! Why, Lord bless my soul, Gammon," quoth Quirk testily, "haven't *you* had your eyes and ears open all this while? Gad, what a crack witness you'd make! A man of your—your intellect—serve a friend at a pinch—and in a matter about his daughter? Ah, how often you've seen 'em together—walking, talking, laughing, dancing, riding—writ in her album—made her presents, and she him. *Evidence?* Oceans of it, and to spare! Secure Subtle—and I wouldn't take £5000 for my verdict!"

"Why, you see, Mr. Quirk," said Gammon, very seriously—"though I've striven my utmost these six months to bring it about, the artful little scamp has never given me the least thing that I could lay hold of, and *swear* to."

"Oh, you'll *recollect* enough, in due time, friend Gammon, if you'll only turn your attention to it; and if you'll bear in mind it's life and death to my poor girl. Oh Lord! I must get my sister to break it to her, and I'll send sealed instructions to Mr. —— Weasel, shall we say? or Lynx? ay, Lynx; for he'll then have to fight for his own pleadings; and can't turn round at the trial and say, 'this is not right,' and 'that's wrong,' and, '*why* didn't you have such and such evidence?' Lynx is the man; and I'll lay the venue in Yorkshire, for Titmouse is devilish disliked down there; and a special jury will be only too

glad to give him a desperate slap in the chops! We'll lay the damages at twenty thousand pounds! Ah, ha! I'll teach the young villain to break the hearts of an old man and his daughter. But, egad," he pulled out his watch, "half-past two; and Nicky Crowbar sure to be put up at three! By Jove! it won't do to be out of the way: he's head of the gang, and they always come down very liberal when they're in trouble. Snap! Amminadab! hollo! who's there? Drat them all, why don't they speak?" The old gentleman was soon, however, attended to.

"Are they here?" he inquired as Mr. Amminadab entered.

"Yes sir, all three; and the coach is at the door, too. Nicky Crowbar's to be up at three, sir"——

"I see—I know—I'm ready," replied Mr. Quirk, who was presently seated in the coach with three gentlemen, to whom he minutely explained the person of Mr. Nicky Crowbar, and the place at which it was quite certain that Mr. Crowbar could *not* have been at half-past eight o'clock on Tuesday the 9th of July, seeing that he happened at that precise time to be elsewhere, in company with these three gentlemen—to wit, at Chelsea, and *not at Clapham.*

Though Mr. Gammon thus sympathized with one of the gentle beings who had been "rifled of all their sweetness," I grieve to say that the other, Miss Tagrag, never occupied his thoughts for one moment. He neither knew nor cared whether or not she was apprised of the destruction of all her fond hopes, by the paragraph which had appeared in the *Aurora.* In fact, he felt that he had really done enough, on the part of Mr. Titmouse, for his early friend and patron, Mr. Tagrag, on whom the stream of fortune had set in strong and steady; and, in short, Mr. Gammon knew that Master Tagrag had received a substantial memento of his connection with Tittlebat Titmouse. In fact, how truly disinterested a man was Mr. Gammon towards all with whom he came in contact! What had he not done, as I have been saying, for the Tagrags? What for Mr. Titmouse? What for the Earl of Dreddlington? What for Mr. Quirk, and even Snap? As for Mr. Quirk, had he not been put in possession of his long coveted bond for £10,000? of which, by the way, he al-

lotted £1000 only to the man—Mr. Gammon—by whose unwearying exertions and consummate ability he obtained so splendid a prize, and £300 to Mr. Snap. Then, had not Mr. Quirk also been paid his bill against Titmouse of £5000 and upwards, and £2500 by Mr. Aubrey? And, governed by the articles of their partnership, what a *lion's half* of this spoil had not been appropriated to the respectable old head of the firm? Mr. Gammon did undoubtedly complain indignantly of the trifling portion allotted to him, but he was encountered by such a desperate pertinacity on the part of Mr. Quirk as baffled him entirely, and caused him to abandon his further claim in disgust and despair. Thus, the £20,000 obtained by Mr. Titmouse, on mortgage of the Yatton property, was reduced at once to the sum of £5000;—but out of this handsome balance had yet to come, first, £800 with interest, due to Mr. Quirk for subsistence-money advanced to his protegé; secondly, £500 due to Mr. Snap, for moneys alleged to have been also lent by him to his friend Titmouse at different times, in the manner that has been already explained to the reader—Snap's demand for repayment being accompanied by *verbatim* copies of between forty and fifty memoranda,—many of them in pencil,—notes of hand, receipts, I.O.U's &c., in whose handwriting the figures representing *the sums lent*, and the times when, could not be ascertained, and did not signify: it being, in point of law, good *primâ facie* evidence for Snap, in the event of a trial, simply to produce the documents and prove the signature of his friend Mr. Titmouse. Titmouse discharged a volley of imprecations at Snap's head, on receiving this unexpected claim, and referred it to Mr. Gammon; who, after subjecting it to a *bonâ fide* and very rigorous examination, found it in vain to attempt to resist, or even diminish it; such perfect method and accuracy had Snap observed in his accounts, that they secured him a clear gain of £350; the difference between that sum and £500, being the amount actually and *bonâ fide* advanced by him to Titmouse. Deducting, therefore, £1300, (the amount of the two minor demands of £800 and £500 above specified,) there remained to Mr. Titmouse out of the £20,000 the sum of £3700: and he

ought to have been thankful; for he *might* have got *nothing*,—or even have been brought in debtor to Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap. I say that Mr. Gammon would seem, from the above statement of accounts, not to have been dealt with in any degree adequately to his merits. He felt it so, but soon reconciled himself to it, occupied as he was with arduous and extensive speculations, amidst all the complication of which he never for a moment lost sight of one object, viz.—*himself*. His schemes were boldly conceived, and he went about the accomplishment of them with equal patience and sagacity. Almost every thing was going as he could wish. He had contrived to place himself in a very convenient fast-and-loose sort of position with reference to his fellow-partners —one which admitted of his easily disengaging himself from them, whenever the proper time arrived for taking such a step. He was absolute and paramount over Titmouse, and could always secure his instant submission, by virtue of the fearful and mysterious talisman which he ever and anon flashed before his startled eyes. He had acquired great influence, also, over the Earl of Dreddlington—an influence which was constantly on the increase; and had seen come to pass an event which he judged to be of great importance to him—namely, the engagement between Titmouse and the Lady Cecilia. Yet was there one object which he had proposed to himself as incalculably valuable and supremely desirable—as the consummation of all his designs and wishes;—I mean the obtaining the hand of Miss Aubrey—and in which he had yet a fearful misgiving of failure. But he was a man whose courage rose with every obstacle; and he fixedly resolved within himself to succeed, at any cost. 'Twas not alone his exquisite appreciation of her personal beauty, her grace, her accomplishments, her lovely temper, her lofty spirit, her high birth—objects all of them dazzling enough to a man of such a powerful and ambitious mind, and placed in such circumstances in life as Gammon. There were certain other considerations, intimately involved in all his calculations, which rendered success in this affair a matter of capital importance—nay indispensable. Knowing, as I do, what had passed, at different times, between that

proud and determined girl, and her constant and enthusiastic lover, Mr. Delamere, I am as certain as a man can be of any thing that has not actually happened, that, though she may possibly not be fated to become Mrs. Delamere, she will certainly NEVER become—Mrs. Gammon. Loving Kate as I do, and being thoroughly acquainted with Gammon, I feel deep interest in his movements, and am watching them with great apprehension: —she, lovely, innocent, unsuspicious; he, subtle, selfish, unscrupulous, desperate! And he has great power in his hands: is he not silently surrounding his destined prey with unperceived but inevitable meshes? God guard thee, my Kate, and reward thy noble devotion to thy brother and his fallen fortunes! Do we chide thee for clinging to them with fond tenacity in their extremity, when thou art daily importuned to enter into that station which thou wouldst so adorn?

Gammon's reception by the Aubreys, in Vivian Street —kind and courteous though it had surely been—had ever since rankled in his heart. Their abstaining from a request to him to prolong his stay, or to renew his visit, he had noted at the time, and had ever since reflected upon with pique and discouragement. Nevertheless he was resolved, at all hazards, to become at least an occasional visiter in Vivian Street. When a fortnight had elapsed without any further intimation to Mr. Aubrey concerning the dreaded balance due to the firm, Gammon ventured to call in, for the purpose of assuring Mr. Aubrey that it was no mere temporary lull; that he might divest his mind of all uneasiness on the subject; and of asking whether he (Gammon) had not told Mr. Aubrey truly that he both could, and would restrain the hand of Mr. Quirk. Could Mr. Aubrey be otherwise than grateful for such active and manifestly disinterested kindness?

Again Gammon made his appearance at Mrs. Aubrey's tea-table—and was again received with all the sweetness and frankness of manner which he had formerly experienced from her and Miss Aubrey. Again he called, on some adroit pretext or another—and once heard Miss Aubrey's rich voice and exquisite performance on the

piano. He became subject to emotions and impulses of a sort that he had never before experienced: yet, whenever he retired from their fascinating society, he felt an aching void, as it were, within—he perceived the absence of all sympathy towards him; he felt indignant—but that did not quench the ardour of his aspirations. 'Tis hardly necessary to say, that on every occasion Gammon effectually concealed the profound and agitating feelings which the sight of Miss Aubrey called forth in him; and what a tax was this upon his powers of concealment and self-control! How he laid himself out to amuse and interest them all! With what racy humour would he describe the vulgar absurdities of Titmouse—the stately eccentricities of the Dreddlingtons! With what eager and breathless interest was he listened to! No man could make himself more unexceptionably agreeable than Gammon; and the ladies really took pleasure in his society; Kate about as far from any notion of the real state of his feelings as of what was at that moment going on at the antipodes. Her reserve towards him sensibly lessened; why, indeed, should she feel it, towards one of whom Dr. Tatham spoke so highly, and who appeared to warrant it?

Moreover, Mr. Gammon took special care to speak in the most unreserved and unqualified manner of the mean and mercenary character of Mr. Quirk—of the miserable style of business in which he, Mr. Gammon, was compelled, for only a short time longer, he trusted, to participate, and which was really revolting to his own feelings; in short, he did his best to cause himself to appear a sensitive and high-minded man, whose unhappy fate it had been to be yoked with those who were the reverse. Mr. Aubrey regarded him from time to time with silent anxiety and interest, as one who had it in his power, at any instant he might choose, to cause the suspended sword to fall upon him; at whose will and pleasure he continued in the enjoyment of his present domestic happiness, instead of being incarcerated in prison; but who had hitherto evinced a disposition of signal forbearance, sincere good-nature, and disinterestedness. They often used to speak of him, and compare the impression which his person and

conduct had produced in their minds; and in two points they agreed—that he exhibited anxiety to render himself agreeable; and that there was a certain *something* about his eye which none of them liked. It seemed as though he had in a manner two natures; and that one of them was watching the efforts made by the other to beguile!

While, however, the Fates thus frowned upon the aspiring attempts of Gammon towards Miss Aubrey, they smiled benignantly enough upon Titmouse, and his suit with the Lady Cecilia. The first shock over —which no lively sensibilities or strong feelings of her ladyship tended to protract, she began insensibly to get familiar with the person, manners, and character of her future lord, and reconciled to her fate. "When people understand that they *must* live together," said a very great man, "they learn to soften, by mutual accommodation, that yoke which they know that they cannot shake off; they become good husbands and wives, from the necessity of remaining husbands and wives, for necessity is a powerful master in teaching the duties which it imposes."* The serene intelligence of Lady Cecilia having satisfied her that "it was her fate" to be married to Titmouse, she resigned herself to it tranquilly, calling in to her assistance divers co-operative reasons for the step she had agreed to take. She could thereby accomplish at all events one darling object of her papa's—the reunion of the long and unhappily-severed family interests. Then Yatton was certainly a delightful estate to be mistress of—a charming residence, and one which she might in all probability calculate on having pretty nearly to herself. His rent-roll was large and unencumbered, and would admit of a handsome jointure. On her accession to her own independent rank, the odious name of Titmouse would disappear in the noble one of Lady Drelincourt, peeress in her own right, and representative of the oldest barony in the kingdom. Her husband would then become a mere cipher—no one would ever hear of

* The late venerable and gifted Lord Stowell, in the case of *Evans*, v. *Evans*, 1 Consistory Reports, p. 36.

him, or inquire after him, or think or care about him—a mere mote in the sunbeam of her own splendour. But above all, thank Heaven! there were many ways in which a *separation* might be brought about—never mind how soon after marriage—a step which was becoming one quite of course, and implied nothing derogatory to the character, or lessening to the personal consequence of the lady—who indeed was almost, as of course, recognised as an object of sympathy, rather than of suspicion or scorn.

These were powerful forces, all impelling her in one direction—and irresistibly. How could it be otherwise with a mere creature of circumstance like her? Notwithstanding all this, however, there were occasions when Titmouse was presented to her in a somewhat startling and sickening aspect. It sometimes almost choked her to see him—ridiculous object!—in the company of gentlemen—to witness their treatment of him, and then reflect that he was about to become her—lord and master. One day, for instance, she accompanied the Earl in the carriage to witness the hounds throw off, not far from Yatton, and where a very brilliant field was expected. There were, in fact, about two hundred of the leading gentlemen of the county assembled—and, dear reader, fancy the figure Titmouse must have presented among them,—his quizzing-glass screwed into his eye, and clad in his little pink and leathers!—What a seat was his! How many significant and scornful smiles, and winks, and shrugs of the shoulders did his appearance occasion among his bold and high bred companions! And only about four or five minutes after they had gone away—this unhappy little devil was thoroughly found out by the noble animal he rode; and who equally well knew *his own business*, and what he had *on*. In trying to take a dwarf wall, on the opposite side of an old green horse-pond by the road-side, he urged his horse with that weak and indecisive impulse which only disgusted him; so he suddenly drew back at the margin of the pond,—over head and heels flew Titmouse, and descended plump on his head into the deep mud, where he remained for a moment or two, up to his shoulders, his little legs kicking about in the air—

"Who's that!" cried one—and another—and another—without stopping, any more than the Life Guards would have stopped for a sudden individual casualty in the midst of their tremendous charge at Waterloo,—till the very last of them, who happened to be no less a person than Lord de la Zouch, seeing, as he came up, the desperate position of the fallen rider, reined up, dismounted, and with much effort and inconvenience aided in extricating Titmouse from his fearful, yet ludicrous position,—and thus preserved to society one of its brightest ornaments. As soon as he was safe—a dismal spectacle to gods and men,—his preserver, not disposed, by discovering who Titmouse was, to supererogatory courtesy, mounted his horse, leaving Titmouse in the care of an old woman whose cottage was not far off, and where Titmouse, having had a good deal of the filth detached from him, remounted his horse and turned its head homewards—heartily disposed, had he but *dared*, cruelly to spur, and kick, and flog it; and in this pickle—stupid, and sullen, and crestfallen—he was overtaken and recognised by Lord Dreddlington and Lady Cecilia, returning from the field!

This was her future husband—

Then again—poor Lady Cecilia!—what thought you of the following, which was one of the letters he addressed to you?—Well might Miss Aubrey exclaim, "how I should like to see their correspondence!"—

"The Albany, Picadilly, London, 12th October, 18—.

"My Dear Cecilia,

"I take Up My pen To Inform you of Arriving safe Here, where Am sorry how^r. To say There Is No one One knows except Tradespeople Going About And so Dull on Acc^t. of Customers Out of Town, Dearest love You Are the Girl of My Heart As I am Of Your's and am particular Lonely Alone Here and wish to be There *where she Is* how I Long to Fold My dearest girl in My Arms hope You Don't Forget Me As soon As I am Absent do You often Think of *me* w^h. I do indeed of *you*. and looking Forward to The Happy Days When We are

United in the Happy bonds of Hymmen, never To part Again dearest I Was Driving yesterday In my New Cabb In the park, where whom Sh^d^. I Meet but That Miss Aubrey W^h^. they say (Between you And Me and The post) is Truly in a Gallopping Consumption on Acc^t^. Of my Not Having Her A likely thing indeed That I Ever car'd for Such an individule wh^h^. Never Did Only of you, Dearest What shall I Send you As A Gift Shall it Be In The cloathing Line, For there Is a Wonderful Fine and Choice Assortm^t^. of Cashmere Shawls and Most Remarkable Handsome Cloaks, All Newly arriv'd fr. Paris, Never Think Of The price w^h^. Between Lovers Goes for Nothing. However *Large the Figure* Only Say what You Shall have and Down It shall Come And Now dearest Girl Adieu.

" 'Those Can't meet Again who Never Part.'

" dearest Your's to command till death.

" T. Titmouse."

" P.T.O.—Love and Duty To My Lord (of Course) whom shall Feel only Too happy to Call My Father-In-Law, the Sooner The better."

When poor Lady Cecilia received this letter, and had read over only half a dozen lines of it, she flung it on the floor, and threw herself down on the sofa, in her dressing-room, and remained silent and motionless for more than an hour; and when she heard Miss Macspleuchan knock at her door for admittance, Lady Cecilia started up, took the letter from the floor, and put it into her dressing-box, before admitting her humble companion.

A succession of such letters as the above might have had the effect upon Lady Cecilia's " *attachment*" to Titmouse, which the repeated affusion of cold water would have upon the thermometer; but the Fates favoured Mr. Titmouse, by investing him with a character, and placing him in a position calculated to give him personal dignity, and thereby redeem and elevate him in the estimation of his fastidious mistress—I mean that of candidate for a seat in parliament, for the representation of a borough in which he had a commanding influence.

After a national commotion commensurate with the magnitude of the boon that was sought for, the great BILL FOR GIVING EVERY BODY EVERY THING had passed into a law, and the people were frantic with joy. Its first fruits were of a sort that satisfied the public expectation; viz. three or four earls were turned into marquises, and two or three marquises into dukes, and deservedly; for these great men had far higher titles to the gratitude and admiration of the country, in exacting this second Magna Charta from King ——, than the stern old barons in extorting the first from King John—namely, they parted with vast substantial political power, for only a nominal *quid pro quo*, in the shape of a bit of riband or a strawberry leaf. Its next immediate effect was to cleanse the Augean stable of the House of Commons, by opening upon it the floodgates of popular will and popular opinion; and having utterly expelled the herd of ignorant and mercenary wretches that had so long occupied and defiled it, their places were to be supplied by a band of patriots and statesmen, as gifted as disinterested—the people's own enlightened, unbiased, and deliberate choice. Once put the government of the country—the administration of affairs—into hands such as these, and the inevitable result would be, the immediate regeneration of society, and the securing the greatest happiness to the greatest number. It was fearfully apparent that, under the old system, we had sunk into irredeemable contempt abroad, and were on the very verge of ruin and anarchy at home. So true is it, that when things come to the worst, they begin to mend. In short, the enlightened and enlarged constituencies began forthwith to look out for fit objects of their choice—for the best men; men of independent fortune; of deep stake in the welfare of the country; of spotless private and consistent public character; who, having had adequate leisure, opportunity, inclination, and capacity, had fitted themselves to undertake, with advantage to the country, the grave responsibilities of statesmen and legislators.

Such candidates, therefore, as Mr. Tittlebat Titmouse became naturally in universal request; and the consequence was, such a prodigious flight of Titmice into the House of Commons—but whither am I wandering? I

have to do with only one little borough—that of Yatton, in Yorkshire. The great charter operated upon it, by extending its boundary—Grilston, and one or two of the adjacent places being incorporated into the new borough. I have ascertained from a very high quarter, in fact, from a *deceased* cabinet minister—a curious and important fact; that had Mr. Titmouse failed in recovering the Yatton property, or been of different political opinions, in either of these cases, the little borough of Yatton was doomed to utter extinction: a circumstance which shows the signal vigilance, the accurate and comprehensive knowledge of local interests and capabilities evinced by these great and good men who were remodelling the representation of the country. And little did my hero suspect that his political opinions, as newly installed owner of Yatton, formed a topic of anxious discussion at more than one cabinet meeting, previous to the passing of the Great Bill! As its boundary was extended, so the constituency of Yatton was enlarged, the invaluable elective franchise being given to those most in need of the advantages it could *immediately* procure; and the fleeting nature of whose interest, naturally enhanced their desire to consult the interests of those who had a permanent and deep stake in its welfare. Though, therefore, the change effected by the new act had so considerably added to the roll of electors, it had not given ground for serious apprehension as to the security of the seat of the owner of the Yatton property. After a very long and private interview between Gammon and Titmouse, in which something transpired which may be referred to hereafter, it was agreed that—(the new writs having issued within one week after the calmed and sobered new constituencies had been organized—which again had been wisely effected within a week or two after the passing of the act)—Mr. Titmouse should instantly scare away all competition, by announcing his determination to start for the borough. As soon as this was known, a deputation from the new electors in Grilston waited upon Mr. Titmouse—to propose the terms on which their support was to be obtained. Titmouse was somewhat startled—but Gammon saw in it the legitimate working of the new system; and—nothing was ever better

managed—nobody in any mischievous secret—no one compromised; but the result was, that one hundred and nine plumpers were secured in Grilston alone for Mr. Titmouse. Then Gammon appointed Messrs. Bloodsuck and Son the local agents of Titmouse; for whom he wrote an address to the electors—and, Titmouse promising to have it printed forthwith, Mr. Gammon returned to town for a day or two. Nothing could have been more skilful than the address which he had prepared—terse, and comprehensive, and showy, meaning every thing or nothing —(*dolosus semper versatur in generalibus*, was an observation of Lord Coke's, on which Gammon kept his eye fixed in drawing up his "address.") Yet it came to pass that on the evening of the day of Gammon's departure, a Mr. Phelim O'Doodle, a splendid billiard-player, and also one of the first members returned—only a few days before—for an Irish borough in the Liberal interest, chanced to take Yatton in his way to Scotland from London; and being intimate with Mr. Titmouse, from whom he had borrowed a little money a few months before, to enable him to present himself to his constituency—they sate down to canvass the merits of the address which the astute but *absent* Gammon had prepared for Titmouse. They pronounced it "devilish dull and tame;" Mr. O'Doodle comparing it to toddy, with the *whiskey omitted:* and availing himself of Gammon's draft as far as he approved of it, he drew up the following address, which put Titmouse into an ecstasy; and he sent it off the very next morning for insertion in the Yorkshire *Stingo*. Here is an exact copy of that judicious and able performance.

"To the worthy and independent electors of Yatton.

"Gentlemen,—His Majesty having been pleased to dissolve the late Parliament under very remarkable and exciting circumstances, and, in the midst of the transports of enthusiasm arising out of the passing of that second Great Charter of our Liberties, the *Act for Giving Everybody Every thing*, to call upon you to exercise immediately the high and glorious privilege of choosing your representative in the New Parliament, I beg leave to announce myself as a candidate for that distinguished

honour. Gentlemen, long before I succeeded in establishing my right to reside among you in my present capacity, I felt a deep interest in the welfare of the tenants of the property, and especially of those residing in the parts adjacent, and who are now so happily introduced into the constituency of this ancient and loyal borough. I trust that the circumstance of my ancestors having resided for ages within this borough, will not indispose you to a favourable reception of their descendant and representative. Gentlemen, my political opinions are those which led to the passing of the Great Measure I have alluded to, and which are bound up in it. Without going into details, which are too multifarious for the limits of such an address as the present, let me assure you, that though firmly resolved to uphold the agricultural interests of this great country, I am equally anxious to sustain the commercial and manufacturing interests; and whenever they are in conflict with each other, I shall be found at my post, zealously supporting *both*, to the utmost of my ability. Though a sincere and firm member and friend of the Established Church, I am not insensible to the fearful abuses which at present prevail in it; and I am bent upon securing the utmost possible latitude to every species of Dissent. While I am resolved to uphold the interests of Protestantism, I think I best do so, by seeking to remove all restrictions from the Catholics, whom I am persuaded will sacredly abstain from endeavouring to promote their own interests at the expense of ours.

"Gentlemen, the established religion is most likely to flourish when surrounded by danger, and threatened by persecution; it has an inherent vitality which will defy, in the long run, all competition. Gentlemen, I am for Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform, which are in fact the Three Polar Stars of my political conduct. I am an advocate for quarterly Parliaments, convinced that we cannot too often be summoned to give an account of our stewardship,—and that the frequency of elections will occasion a wholesome agitation, and stimulus to trade. I am for extending the elective franchise to all, except those who are actually the inmates of a prison or a poorhouse on the day of election. I am an uncompromising advocate of civil and religious liberty all over the globe;

and, in short, of giving the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Gentlemen, before concluding, I wish to state explicitly, as the result of long and deep inquiry and reflection, that every constituency is entitled, nay bound, to exact from a candidate for its suffrages the most strict and minute pledges as to his future conduct in Parliament, in every matter, great or small, that can come before it; in order to prevent his judgment being influenced and warped by the dangerous sophistries and fallacies which are broached in Parliament, and his integrity from the base, sinister, and corrupting influences which are invariably brought to bear on public men. I am ready, therefore, to pledge myself to any thing that may be required of me by any elector who may honour me with his support. Gentlemen, such are my political principles, and I humbly hope that they will prove to be those of the electors of this ancient and loyal borough, so as to warrant the legislature in having preserved it in existence amidst the wholesale havoc which it has just made in property of this description. Though it is not probable that we shall be harassed by a contest, I shall make a point of waiting upon you all personally, and humbly answering all questions that may be put to me: and should I be returned, rely upon it, that I will never give you occasion to regret your display of so signal an evidence of your confidence in me.—I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and humble servant,

T. Titmouse.

"Yatton, 3d December, 18—."

"Upon my soul, if that don't carry the election hollow," said Mr. O'Doodle, laying down his pen, and mixing himself a fresh tumbler of brandy and water, "you may call me bog-trotter to the end of my days and be—— to me!"

"Why—a—ya—as! 'pon my life it's quite a superior article," quoth Titmouse; "but—eh? d'ye think they'll ever believe I writ it all? Egad, my fine fellow, to compose a piece of composition like that—and suppose those dear fellows begin asking me all sorts of thingembobs, eh? You *couldn't* stay and go about with one a bit?"

"Faith, Titty, an' your mighty wide awake to the way of doing business, ah, ha! Murder and thieves! what does it signify what you choose to say or write to them? they're only pisintry; and—the real point to be looked at is this—all those that you command, of course you will, or send 'em to the right about; and those that you can't—that's the *new* blackguards round about—*buy*, if it's necessary, faith"——

"It's —— !—It *is*, 'pon my soul!" whispered Titmouse.

"Oh? Is it in earnest you are? Then you're M. P. for the borough; and on the strength of it I'll replenish!" and so he did, followed by Titmouse; and in a pretty state they, some hour or two afterwards, were conducted to their apartments.

It is difficult to describe the rage of Gammon on seeing the address which had been substituted for that which he had prepared, with so much caution and tact: but the thing was done, and he was obliged to submit. The Address duly appeared in the Yorkshire *Stingo*, and was also placarded liberally all over the borough, and distributed about, and excited a good deal of interest, and also much approbation among the new electors. It was thought, however, that it was a piece of supererogation, inasmuch as there could be no possible doubt that Mr. Titmouse would *walk over the course.*

In this, however, it presently proved that the *quidnuncs* of Yatton were very greatly mistaken. A copy of the Yorkshire *Stingo*, containing the foregoing "Address," was sent, on the day of its publication, by Dr. Tatham to Mr. Aubrey, who had read it aloud, with feelings of mingled sorrow and contempt, on the evening of its arrival, in the presence of Mrs. Aubrey, Miss Aubrey, and, by no means an unfreqeunt visiter, Mr. Delamere. The Aubreys were sad enough; and he endeavoured to dissipate the gloom that hung over them, by ridiculing, very bitterly and humorously, the pretensions of the would-be member for Yatton—the presumed writer (who, however, Kate protested, without giving her reasons, could never have been Mr. Titmouse) of the precious "Address." He partially succeeded. Both Aubrey and he laughed heartily as they went more deliberately over it; but Kate and Mrs. Aubrey spoke very gravely and indignantly about that part

of it which related to the Established Church and the Protestant religion.

"Oh dear, dear!" quoth Kate, at length, with a sudden burst of impetuosity, after a considerable and rather melancholy pause in the conversation; "only to think that such an odious little wretch is to represent the dear old——What would I not give to see him defeated?"

"Pho, Kate," replied her brother, rather sadly, "who is there to oppose him? Pickering told me, you know, that he should not go into the House again; and even if he felt disposed to contest Yatton, what chance could he have against Mr. Titmouse's influence?"

"Oh, I'm sure all the old tenants hate the little monkey, to a man."

"That may be, Kate, but they must vote for him, or be turned out of"——

"Oh, I've no *patience*, Charles, to hear of such things!" interrupted his sister, with not a little petulence in her manner.

"Do you mean to say, that you should like to see a rival start to contest your dear old borough with Mr. Titmouse?" inquired Mr. Delamere, who had been listening to the foregoing brief colloquy in silence, his eyes fixed with eager delight on the animated and beautiful countenance of Miss Aubrey.

"*Indeed* I should, Mr. Delamere," cried Kate eagerly: adding, however, with a sudden sigh, looking at her brother; "but—heigh-ho!—as Charles says, how absurd it is to fret one's-self about it—about a thing we can't help—and—a place one's no more any concern with?" As she said this, her voice fell a little, and her eyes filled with tears. But her little sally had been attended with consequences she had little dreamed of. Mr. Delamere took leave of them shortly afterwards, without communicating a word of any intentions he might have conceived upon the subject to any of them. But the first place he went to, in the morning, was a great banker's, who had been appointed the principal acting executor of the Marquis of Fallowfield, a very recently deceased uncle of Delamere's, whom his Lordship had left a legacy of £5000; and 'twas to get at this same legacy that was the object of Delamere's visit to Sir Omnium Bullion's.

For some time the worthy baronet—who had not then even proved the will—would not listen to the entreaties of the eager young legatee: but the moment that he heard of the purpose for which it was wanted, Sir Omnium being a very fierce Tory, and who had *lost* his own snug borough by the Bill for *Giving Everybody Every Thing*, instantly relented. "There, my fine fellow, sign *that*," said Sir Omnium, tossing to him an "I. O. U. £5000," and drawing him a check for the amount: wishing him, with all imaginable zeal and energy, good speed. His eager excitement would not allow him to wait till the evening, for the mail; so, within a couple of hours' time of effecting this delightful arrangement with Sir Omnium, he was seated in a post-chaise and four, rattling at top speed on his way to Yorkshire. Sufficiently astonished were Lord and Lady de la Zouch, when he presented himself to them at Fotheringham. Infinitely more so, when he named the object of his coming down, and with irresistible entreaties sought his father's sanction for the enterprise.

'Twas very hard for Lord de la Zouch to deny any thing to one on whom he doated as he did upon his son. Moreover, his lordship was one of the keenest politicians living; and as for elections, he was an old campaigner, and had stood several desperate contests, and spent immense sums upon them. And here was his son, to use a well-known phrase, indeed *a chip of the old block*; Lord de la Zouch, in short, really felt a secret pleasure in contemplating the resemblance to his early self—and after a little demur he began to give way. He shook his head, however, discouragingly; spoke of Delamere's youth—barely two-and-twenty; the certainty of defeat, and the annoyance of being beaten by such a creature as Titmouse; the suddenness and lateness of the move—and so forth.

More and more impetuous, however, became his son.

"I'll tell you what sir," said Lord de la Zouch, "it strikes me, that this extraordinary, and expensive, and hopeless scheme of yours, is all the result of—eh? I see—I understand. It's done to please—Pray, sir, how long, before you left town, had you seen Miss"——

"I pledge my word, sir, that neither Miss Aubrey, nor

Mr. nor Mrs. Aubrey—whom, however, I certainly saw the very night before I started, and conversed with on the subject of Mr. Titmouse's address—has interchanged one syllable with me on the subject of my starting for the borough; and I believe them to be at this moment as ignorant of what I am about as you were the moment before you saw me here."

"It is enough," said his father, who knew that his son, equally with himself, had a rigorous regard for truth on all occasions, great and small.

"Well—I—I—certainly, we shall be laughed at for our pains; it's really a madcap sort of business, Geoffry; but"—Lord de la Zouch had given way—"I should not like to have been thwarted by *my* father on an occasion like the present; so, let it be done, as you've set your heart upon it. And," he added, with a smile, "pray, sir, have you considered what I shall have to pay for your sport?"

"Not one penny, sir!"

"Ay!" exclaimed his lordship briskly—"How's that, sir?"

Then Delamere told him of what he had done; at which Lord de la Zouch first looked serious, and then burst into laughter at the eagerness of old Sir Omnium to aid the affair. "No, no," said his lordship, "that must not stand; I won't have *any* risk of Sir Omnium's getting into a scrape, and shall write off to request him to annul the transaction—with many thanks for what he has done—and I'll try whether I have credit enough with my bankers—eh, Geoffry?"

"You are very kind to me, sir, but really I would rather"——

"Pho, pho—let it be as I say; and now, go and dress for dinner, and, after that, the sooner you get about *your* 'Address' the better. Let me see a draft of it as soon as it is finished. Let Mr. Parkinson be sent for immediately from Grilston, to see how the land lies; and, in short, if we *do* go into the thing, let us push into it with spirit. And hark'ee, sir—as to that address of your's, I'll have no despicable trimming, and trying to catch votes, by vague and flattering"——

"Trust me, sir! Mine shall be, at all events, a contrast to that of my—*honourable opponent*."

"Go straight a-head, sir; nail your colours to the mast. Speak out in a plain, manly way, so that no one can misunderstand you. I'd rather a thousand times over see you beaten out of the field—lose the election like a gentlemen—than win it by any sort of TRICKERY, especially as far as the profession of your political sentiments and opinions is concerned. Bear yourself so, Geoffry, in this your maiden struggle, that when it is over, you may be able to lay your hand on your heart, and say, 'I have *won* honourably'—'I have *lost* honourably.' So long as you can feel and say *this*, laugh at election bills—at the long faces of your friends—the exulting faces of your enemies. Will you bear all this in mind, Geoffry?" added Lord de la Zouch.

"I will, I will, sir," replied his eager son; and added, with an excited air, "Won't it come on them like"——

"Do yo hear that bell, sir?" said Lord de la Zouch, moving away. Delamere bowed, and with a brisk step, a flushed cheek, and an elated air, betook himself to his dressing-room, to prepare for dinner.

Shortly after dinner, Mr. Parkinson made his appearance, and, to his infinite amazement, was invested instantly with the character of agent for Mr. Delamere, as candidate for the borough! After he and the earl had heard the following address read by Delamere, they very heartily approved of it. Mr. Parkinson took it home with him; it was in the printer's hands that very night, and by seven o'clock in the morning, was being stuck up plentifully on all the walls in Grilston, and, in fact, all over the borough:—

"To the Independent Electors of the Borough of Yatton.

"Gentlemen,

"I hope you will not consider me presumptuous, in venturing to offer myself to your notice as a candidate for the honour of representing you in parliament. In point of years, I am, I acknowledge, even younger than the gentleman whom I have come forward to oppose. But, indeed, for the fact of his being personally a comparative stranger to you, I should have paused long before contesting with him the representation of a borough on which he has unquestionably certain legitimate claims.

The moment, however, that I read his Address, I resolved to come forward and oppose him. Gentlemen, the chief, if not the only ground on which I come forward is, that I disapprove of the tone and spirit of that Address, and hold opinions entirely opposed to all those which it expresses, and which I consider to be unworthy of any one seeking so grave a trust as that of your member of Parliament. As for my own opinions, they are in all essential respects identical with those of the gentlemen who have during a long series of years, represented you, and especially with those of my highly honoured and gifted friend Mr. Aubrey. Gentlemen, my own family is not unknown to you, nor are the opinions and principles which for centuries they have consistently supported, and which are also mine.

"I am an affectionate and uncompromising friend of our glorious and venerable Established Church, and of its union with the State; which it is my inflexible determination to support by every means in my power, as the most effectual mode of securing civil and religious liberty. I am disposed to resist any further concessions either to Roman Catholics or Dissenters, because I think that they cannot be made safely or advantageously. Gentlemen, there *is* a point at which toleration becomes anarchy; and I am desirous to keep as far from that point as possible.

"I earnestly deprecate putting our Agricultural or Commercial and Manufacturing interests into *competition* with each other, as needless and mischievous. Both are essential elements in the national welfare; both should be upheld to the utmost: but if circumstances should unhappily bring them into inevitable conflict, I avow myself heart and soul a friend to the Agricultural interest. Gentlemen, I know not whether it would be more derogatory to your character, or to mine, to exact or give *pledges* as to my conduct on any particular measure, great or small, which may come before Parliament. It appears to me both absurd and ignominious, and inconsistent with every true principle of representation. One, however, I willingly give you—that I will endeavour to do my duty, by consulting your interests as a part of the general interests of the nation. I trust that I never shall

be found uncourteous or inaccessible; and I am confident that none of you will entertain unreasonable expectations concerning my power to serve you individually or collectively.

"Gentlemen, having entered into this contest, I pledge myself to fight it out to the last; and, if I fail, to retire with good-humour. My friends and I will keep a vigilant eye on any attempts which may be made to resort to undue influence or coercion; which, however, I cannot suppose will be the case.

"Gentlemen, this is the best account I can give you, within the limits of such an Address as the present, of my political opinions, and of the motives which have induced me to come forward; and I shall within a day or two proceed to call upon you personally; and in the meanwhile I remain,

"Gentlemen,

"Your faithful servant,

"Geoffry Lovel Delamere.

"Fotheringham Castle,
7th Dec. 18—."

Two or three days afterwards, there arrived at Mr. Aubrey's, in Vivian Street, two large packets, franked "De la Zouch," and addressed to Mr. Aubrey, containing four copies of the foregoing "Address," accompanied by the following hurried note:—

"My Dear Aubrey,—What think you of this sudden and somewhat Quixotic enterprise of my son! I fear it is quite hopeless—but there was no resisting his importunities. I must say he is going into the affair, (which has already made a prodigious stir down here,) in a very fine spirit. His *Address* is good, is it not? The only thing I regret is, his entering the lists with such a little miscreant as that fellow Titmouse—and, moreover, being *beaten* by him. Yours ever faithfully and affectionately,

"De la Zouch.

"P. S.—You should only see little Dr. Tatham since he has heard of it. He spins about the village like a humming-top. I hope that, as far as his worldly interests are

concerned, he is not acting imprudently. Our dear love to the ladies. (In great haste.)

"Fotheringham, 8th Dec. 18—."

This letter was read with almost suspended breath by Mr. Aubrey, and then by Mrs. and Miss Aubrey. With still greater emotion were the printed enclosures opened and read. Each was held in a trembling hand, and with colour coming and going. Miss Aubrey's heart beat faster and faster; she turned very pale—but with a strong effort recovered herself. Then taking the candle, she withdrew with a hasty and excited air, taking her copy of the Address with her to her own room; and there burst into tears, and wept for some time. She felt her heart dissolving in tenderness towards Delamere: it was some time before she could summon resolution enough to return. When she did, Mrs. Aubrey made a faint effort to rally her; but each, on observing the traces of each other's recent and strong emotion, was silent, and with difficulty refrained from bursting again into tears.

Equally strong emotions, but of a very different description, were excited in the bosoms of certain persons at Yatton Hall, by the appearance of Mr. Delamere's Address. 'Twas Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, (junior)—a middle-sized, square-set young man, of about thirty, with a broad face, a very flat nose, light frizzly hair, and deep-set gray eyes—a bustling, confident, hard-mouthed fellow, —who, happening to be stirring in the main street of Grilston early in the morning of the 8th Dec. 18—, beheld a man in the act of sticking up Mr. Delamere's Address against a wall. Having prevailed on the man to part with one, Mr. Bloodsuck was within a quarter of an hour on horseback, galloping down to Yatton—almost imagining himself to be carrying with him a sort of hand-grenade, which might explode in his pocket as he went on. He was ushered into the breakfast room, where sate Mr. Gammon and Mr. Titmouse, just finishing breakfast.

"My stars—good morning! gents,—but here's a kettle of fish!" quoth Mr. Bloodsuck, with an excited air, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; and then plucking out of his pocket the damp and crumpled Address of Mr. Dela-

mere, he handed it to Mr. Gammon, who changed colour on seeing it, and read it over in silence. Mr. Titmouse looked at him with a disturbed air; and, having finished his mixture of tea and brandy, "Eh—e—eh, Gammon! —I—say"—he stammered—"what's in the wind? 'Pon my soul, you look—eh?"

"Nothing but a piece of good fortune, for which you are indebted to your distinguished friend, Mr. Phelim O'Something," replied Gammon, bitterly, "whose Address has called forth an opponent whom you would not otherwise have had."

"Hang Mr. O'Doodle!" exclaimed Titmouse; "I, 'pon my precious soul, I always thought him a fool, and a knave. I'll make him pay me the money he owes me!" and he strode up and down the room, with his hands thrust furiously into his pockets.

"You had perhaps better read this Address," quoth Mr. Gammon, with a blighting smile, "as it slightly concerns you;" and handing it to Titmouse, the latter sate down to obey him.

"That cock won't fight, though, eh?" inquired Mr. Bloodsuck, as he resumed his seat after helping himself to an enormous slice of cold beef at the side table.

"I think it will," replied Gammon, thoughtfully; and presently continued, after a pause, "it is useless to say any thing about the haughty intolerant toryism it displays; that is all fair; but *is* it not hard, Mr. Bloodsuck, that when I had written an Address which would have effectually"——

"Mr. Phelim O'Doodle owes me three hundred pounds, Gammon, and I hope you'll get it for me at once; 'pon my soul, he's a most cursed scamp," quoth Titmouse furiously, looking up with an air of desperate chagrin, on hearing Gammon's last words. That gentleman, however, took no notice of him, and proceeded, addressing Mr. Bloodsuck—"I have weighed every word in that Address; it means mischief. It's evidently been well considered; it is calm and determined—and we shall have a desperate contest, or I am grievously mistaken."

"E—e—eh? E—h? What, Gammon?" inquired Titmouse, who, though his eye appeared to have been travelling over the all-important document which he held in his

hand, had been listening with trembling anxiety to what was said by his companions.

"I say that we are to have a contested election for the borough; you won't walk over the course as you might have done. Here's a dangerous opponent started."

"What? 'Pon my soul—for *my* borough? For Yatton?"

"Yes, and one who will fight you tooth and nail."

"'Pon—my—precious soul! What a cursed scamp! What a most infernal black——Who is it?"

"No *blackguard*, sir," interrupted Gammon, very sternly; "but—a gentleman every way equal to yourself," he added, with a cruel smile, "the Honourable Mr. Delamere, the son and heir of Lord de la Zouch."

"By jingo! you don't say so! Why, he's a hundred thousand a-year," interrupted Titmouse, turning very pale.

"Oh, *that* he has, at least," interposed Mr. Bloodsuck, who had nearly finished a tremendous breakfast; "and two such bitter Tories you never saw or heard of before—for like father, like son."

"Egad! is it?" inquired Titmouse, completely crestfallen. "Well! and what if—eh, Gammon? Isn't it?"

"It is a very serious business," quoth Gammon.

"By Jove—isn't it a cursed piece of—impudence! What? Come into *my borough?* He might as well come into my house! Isn't one as much mine as the other? It's as bad as house-breaking—but we're beforehand with him with those prime chaps at Gr——." Mr. Bloodsuck's teeth chattered; he glanced towards the door; and Gammon gave Titmouse a look that almost paralyzed him.

"They'll bleed freely?" said Bloodsuck, with a desperate effort to look concerned—whereas he was in a secret ecstasy.

"Lord de la Zouch could not have entered into this thing if he had not some end in view which he considers attainable—and as for money"—

"Oh, as for that, ten thousand pounds to him is a mere drop in a bucket."

"O Lord! O Lord! and must *I* spend money too?" inquired Titmouse, with a look of ludicrous alarm.

"We must talk this matter over alone, Mr. Bloodsuck,"

said Gammon, anxiously—"shall we go to Grilston, or will you fetch your father hither?"

"'Pon my soul, Gammon, those cursed Aubreys, you may depend on't, are at the bottom of all this"—

"*That* there's not the least doubt of," quoth Bloodsuck, as he buttoned up his coat with a matter-of-fact air: but the words of Titmouse caused Mr. Gammon suddenly to look first at one, and then at the other of them, with a keen penetratiug glance; and presently his expressive countenance showed that *surprise* had been succeeded by gloomy thoughtfulness.

CHAPTER V.

THERE had not been a contested election at Yatton, till the present one between Mr. Delamere and Mr. Titmouse, for upwards of twenty-four years; its two members having been, till then, owing to the smallness of the constituency, their comparative unanimity of political sentiment, and the dominant influence of the Yatton family, returned pretty nearly as a matter of course. When, therefore, quiet little Yatton (for such it was, albeit somewhat enlarged by the new Act) became the scene of so sudden and hot a contest as that which I am going to describe, and under such novel and exciting circumstances, it seemed in a manner, quite beside itself. The walls were everywhere covered with staring, glaring, placards —red, blue, green, yellow, white, purple—judiciously designed to stimulate the electors into a calm and intelligent exercise of the important functions. Here are a few of them:—

"Vote for TITMOUSE, the MAN of the PEOPLE!" "TITMOUSE and CIVIL and RELIGIOUS LIBERTY!" "TITMOUSE and PURITY of ELECTION!" "TITMOUSE and NEGRO EMANCIPATION!" "TITMOUSE and CHEAP ALE!" "Vote for TITMOUSE and NO MISTAKE!" "TITMOUSE and QUARTERLY PARLIAMENTS, VOTE BY BALLOT, and UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE!"

'Twas thus that the name of my little friend, like that of many others of his species, was attached to great public questions, after the manner of a kettle tied to a dog's-tail; and a pretty clatter it made!

But there were others of a more elaborate and impressive character.

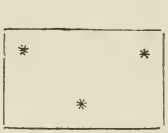
"Electors of Yatton!! Be not deceived!!! The enemy

is among you! Do you wish to reap the full fruits of the glorious boon lately conferred on you? Rush to the poll, and VOTE for TITMOUSE. Do you wish to see them torn from your grasp by a selfish and beastly aristocracy? *Get a pair of handcuffs*, and go and vote for MR. DELAMERE!!!!"

"QUÆRE. If a *certain Boroughmongering Peer* should command his son to vote for the REPEAL of the Great Bill which enfranchised the inhabitants of Grilston, Succombe, and Warkleigh—would not that son obey him? *How is this*, Mr. DELAMERE?"

'Twas not, to give the devil his due, Mr. Titmouse's fault that his placards did not contain many vulgar and presumptuous personalities against his opponent; but it was entirely owing to Mr. Gammon's want of the requisite wit and spirit. He felt in fact that such a candidate as Mr. Delamere, afforded but few salient points of attack, in respect either of his person, his position in society, or his conduct. He, also, had his placards.—"VOTE for DELAMERE!" "DELAMERE and INDEPENDENCE!" "VOTE for DELAMERE, the FARMER'S FRIEND!" "DELAMERE, and the CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH AND STATE?"

Both the candidates established their head-quarters at Grilston; Mr. Delamere at the "*Hare and Hounds*" Inn, Mr. Titmouse at the "*Woodlouse*." Over the bow-window of the former, streamed a noble blue banner, with an emblazonment of the Bible and Crown, and the words, "CHURCH, KING, and CONSTITUTION—OLD ENGLAND FOR EVER!" Over the latter hung an immense yellow banner, with three stars, so—



(being the "Three Polar Stars" spoken of in Mr. Titmouse's Address,) and the words—"PEACE! RETRENCHMENT!! REFORM!!!" in immense gilt letters. The walls and windows of each were, moreover, covered with various coloured placards—but I shall not weary the reader by attempting to describe in detail the humours of a country

election, which have employed already thousands of able and graphic pens and pencils. Surely what else are they than the sticks and straws that float along the eddying and roughened surface? The whole mass of water is moving along; and our object should be rather to discover its depth, its force, and direction. Principles are in conflict; the fate of the nation is involved in a popular election. Such matters as I have alluded to, are but the laughable devices resorted to, in order to delude the grinning vulgar, and disguise the movements of those calm and calculating persons who are playing the deep game of politics. Under cover of a ludicrous hubbub, might be observed, for instance, in this little borough—subject to certain petty local disturbing forces—a deadly struggle for ascendency between the monarchical and the democratical principle; between rampant innovation and obstinate immobility; between the wealthy few and the poor many; between property and ability. If any thing like this *were* the case, how many of the electors—new or old—of Yatton—(who may perhaps be compared to chessmen in the hands of long-headed players)—knew any more about the matter than a private soldier at Waterloo thought of, comprehended, or appreciated, the complicated and mighty schemes of a Wellington or Napoleon, whose bidding he was doing, or of the prodigious consequences attached to the success or failure of either? Some people talk vehemently about the "paramount necessity for educating the lower classes." It is, indeed, of incalculable importance that they should be instructed; but is it not of still higher importance that the UPPER CLASSES should be instructed, if only on the account of their being the holders of that PROPERTY, in greater or less proportions, with its inseparable power and influence, which, directly or indirectly, determines all the movements of the state? Could such a state of things as universal suffrage be supposed to exist consistently with the preservation of social order—of society—it would still be impossible to extirpate or effectually to counteract the influence of property, in whose hands soever it may be placed. Pluck out the vilest of the bellowing bullies surrounding the hustings, him (of course a non-elector) most conspicuous for his insolence and brutality; suppose him suddenly or gradu-

ally become the owner of a great, or small property, with the influence it gives him over customers, tenants, and dependents: do you suppose that he will not at once, either gently or roughly, according to his temper, begin to exercise his power, (that which is so dear to the heart of man,) by dictating the exercise of the elective franchise in favour of those political opinions which he may happen to favour? Is not THIS the man to instruct, and the better in proportion to the extent of his real influence? Except in those brief and horrid intervals of social convulsion, in which δικα και πανΐα παλιν στρεπεΐαι—however popularized and extended may apparently be the system of electing parliamentary representatives, those who really return members to Parliament will—whether themselves actually electors or not, and whether directly or indirectly—be the holders of property, in villages, in towns, in cities, in boroughs and counties. The influence of property is inevitable as that of gravitation: and losing sight of this, people may split their heads in vain, and chatter till the arrival of the Greek kalends, about extending further and further the elective franchise, shortening Parliaments, and voting by ballot. Whether it *ought* to be so, signifies little, when we know that it is, and *will be* so:—but now it is time to return to Yatton; and if I be but this once forgiven, I will not diverge again in a hurry from the main course of events.

Lord de la Zouch, who resided some eight or ten miles from Yatton, soon discovered, as also did sundry other very able and experienced electioneering friends, taking an interest in his son's success, that the movements of the enemy were directed by a strong and skilful hand; which could never be that of Mr. Titmouse. However slight and faint may be the hopes of success with which a man enters into an interesting and important undertaking, they very soon begin to increase and brighten with eager action; and it was so with Lord de la Zouch. He was not long in tracing the powerful but cautiously concealed agency of our friend Mr. Gammon.

One or two such dangerous and artful snares were detected by the watchful and practised eyes of his lordship and his friends, just in time to prevent Delamere from being seriously compromised, as satisfied them that good

Mr. Parkinson, with all his bustle, energy, and heartiness, was dreadfully overmatched by his astute opponent, Mr. Gammon; and that in the hands of Mr. Parkinson, the contest would become, as far as Delamere was concerned, a painful and ridiculous farce. A council of war, therefore, was called at Fotheringham Castle: the result of which was an express being sent off to London, to bring down immediately a first-rate electioneering agent—Mr. Crafty—and place in his hands the entire management of Mr. Delamere's cause. Mr. Crafty was between forty and forty-five years old. His figure, of middle height, was very spare. He was always dressed in a plain suit of black, with white neck-kerchief, and no collars: yet no one that knew the world, could mistake him for a dissenting minister!—He was very calm and phlegmatic in his manner and movements—there was not a particle of passion or feeling in his composition. He was a mere *thinking machine*, in exquisite order. He was of marvellous few words. His face was thin and angular. His chin and temples formed an isosceles triangle; his chin being very peaked, his forehead very broad. His hair was dark, and cut almost as close as that of a foot soldier—and this it was that helped to give his countenance that expression at once quaint and unaffected, which, once observed was not likely soon to be forgotten. His eye was blue, and intensely cold and bright—his complexion fresh; he had no whiskers; there was a touch of sarcasm about the corners of his mouth. Every thing about him bespoke a man cold, cautious, acute, matter-of-fact. "*Business*" was written all over his face. He had devoted himself to electioneering tactics; and he might be said to have reduced them, indeed, to a science. No one could say whether he was of Whig or Tory politics: my impression is, that he cared not a straw for either. This was the man who was to be pitted against Gammon: and these two gentlemen may be perhaps looked upon as the real *players*, whose *backers* were—Delamere and Titmouse.

Mr. Crafty soon made his appearance at Yatton; and seemed, in a manner, to have dropped into Mr. Delamere's committee-room from the clouds. His presence did not appear *quite* unexpected; yet no one seemed to know why,

whence, or at whose instance he had come. He never went near Fotheringham, nor ever mentioned the name of its noble owner, who (between ourselves) contemplated the accession of Crafty with feelings of calm exultation and confidence. Mr. Delamere's "*committee*" was instantly disbanded, and no new one named. In fact, *there was to be none at all:* and Mr. Titmouse's friends were, for a while, led to believe that the enemy were already beginning to beat a retreat. A quiet banker at Grilston, and a hard-hearted land-surveyor and agent of the same place were alone apparently taken into Mr. Crafty's confidence. Mr. Parkinson, even, was sent to the right about; and his rising pique and anger were suddenly quelled by the steadfast and significant look with which Mr. Crafty observed in dismissing him—"*It won't do.*"

Adjoining, and opening into the large room in which, till Mr. Crafty's arrival, Mr. Delamere's committee had sate, was a very small one; and in it Mr. Crafty established his head-quarters. He came, accompanied—though no one for a while knew it—by three of his familiars; right trusty persons, in sooth. One of them always sate on a chair, at the outside of the door leading into Mr. Crafty's room, over which he kept guard as a sentinel. The other two disposed themselves according to orders. Mr. Gammon soon *felt* the presence of his secret and formidable opponent, in the total change—the quiet system—that became all of a sudden apparent in the enemy's tactics: his watchful eye and quick perception, detected, here and there, the faint vanishing traces of a sly and stealthy foot—the evidences of experienced skill; and one morning early he caught a glimpse of Mr. Crafty, (with whose name and fame he was familiar)—and returned home with a grave consciousness that the contest had become one exceedingly serious: that—so to speak—he must instantly spread out every stitch of canvass. In short, he made up his mind for mischief, as soon as he gave Lord de la Zouch credit for being *resolved to win;* and felt the necessity for acting with equal caution and decision. During that day he obtained an advance from a neighbouring banker of two thousand pounds, on the security of a deposit of a portion of the title deeds of the Yatton property. He had, indeed, occasion for great resources,

personal as well as pecuniary; for instance—he had reason to believe that the enemy had already penetrated to his strong hold, the QUAINT CLUB at Grilston, (for that was the name of the club into which the one hundred and nine new voters had formed themselves.)

Though Gammon had agreed, after much negotiation, to buy them at the very liberal sum of ten pounds a-head, he had reason, shortly after the arrival of Mr. Crafty, to believe that they had been tampered with; for as he was late one evening moodily walking up to the Hall, in the park, he overtook a man whose person he did not at first recognise in the darkness, but whose fearfully significant motions soon ensured him recognition. It was, in fact, the man who had hitherto treated with him on behalf of the Quaint Club; one Benjamin Bran, (commonly called *Ben Bran*,) a squat, bow-legged baker of Grilston. He uttered not a word, nor did Mr. Gammon; but, on being recognised, simply held up to Mr. Gammon his two outstretched hands, *twice*, with a significant and inquiring look. Gammon gazed at him for a moment with fury; and muttering—"to-morrow—here—the same hour!" hurried on to the Hall in the utmost perplexity and alarm.

The dilemma in which he felt himself, kept him awake half the night. When once you come to *this sort of work*, you are apt to give your opponent credit for deeper manœuvring than you can at the time fully appreciate; and the fate of the battle may soon be rendered really doubtful. Then, every thing—inclusive of serious consequences, extending far beyond the mere result of the election—depends upon the skill, temper, and experience of the real and responsible directors of the election. Was Ben Bran's appearance a move on the part of Crafty? Had that gentleman bought him over and converted him into a spy—was he now playing the traitor? Or was the purse of Titmouse to be *bonâ fide* measured against that of Lord de la Zouch? *That would be dreadful!* Gammon felt (to compare him for a moment to an animal with whom he had some kindred qualities) much like a cat on a very high glass wall, afraid to stir in any direction, and yet unable to continue where he was; while the two candidates, attended by their sounding bands, and civil and smiling friends, were making their public demon-

strations and canvassing the electors, as if thereby they exercised the slightest possible influence over one single elector on either side!

As I have already intimated, the battle was being fought by two calm and crafty heads, in two snug and quiet little rooms in Grilston—one at the Hare and Hounds, the other at the Woodlouse Inn; of course, I mean Mr. Crafty and Mr. Gammon. The former within a very few hours saw that the issue of the struggle lay with the Quaint Club; and from one of his trusty emissaries—a man whom no one ever saw in communication with him, who was a mere stranger in Grilston, indifferent as to the result of the election, but delighting in its frolics, who was peculiarly apt to get sooner drunk than any one he drank with—Mr. Crafty ascertained, that though the enlightened members of the Quaint Club had certainly formed a predilection for the principles of Mr. Titmouse, yet they possessed a candour which disposed them to hear all that might be advanced in favour of the principles of his opponent.

Mr. Crafty's first step was to ascertain what had been already done or attempted on behalf of Mr. Delamere, and also of Mr. Titmouse; then the exact number of the voters, whom he carefully classified. He found that there were exactly four hundred who might be expected to poll; the new electors amounting in number to one hundred and sixty, the old ones to two hundred and forty, and principally scot-and-lot voters. In due time he ascertained, that of the former class only *thirty-six* could be relied upon for Mr. Delamere. The tenants of the Yatton property within the borough amounted to one hundred and fifteen. They had been canvassed by Mr. Delamere and his friends with great delicacy; and twenty-three of them had voluntarily pledged themselves to vote for him, and risk all consequences; intimating that they hated and despised their new landlord, as much as they had loved their old one, whose principles they understood to be those of Mr. Delamere. Then there remained a class of "*accessibles*," (to adopt the significant language of Mr. Crafty,) in number one hundred and twenty-five. These were persons principally resident in and near Yatton, subject undoubtedly to strong and di-

rect influence on the part of Mr. Titmouse, but still not absolutely at his command. Of these no fewer than seventy had pledged themselves in favour of Mr. Delamere; and, in short, thus stood Mr. Crafty's calculations as to the probable force on both sides:

DELAMERE.		TITMOUSE.		
New Voters, - -	36	New Voters—		
Yatton tenants - -	23	*Quaint Club*,	109	
Accessibles, - -	70	Others, -	21	
			—	130
	129	Tenants, - - - -		92
		Accessibles, - - -		35
				257

Now, of the class of *accessibles* twenty remained yet unpledged, and open to conviction; and, moreover, both parties had good ground for believing that they would *all* be convinced *one way—i. e.* towards either Mr. Titmouse or Mr. Delamere. Now, if the Quaint Club could be in any way detached from Mr. Titmouse, it would leave him with a majority of *seventeen* only over Mr. Delamere; and then, if by any means the twenty accessibles could be secured for Mr. Delamere, he would be placed in a majority of three over his opponent. Whichever way *they* went, however, it was plain that the Quaint Club held the election in their own hands, and intended to keep it so. Gammon's calculations differed but slightly from those of Crafty; and thenceforth both directed their best energies towards the same point, the Quaint Club—going on all the while with undiminished vigour and assiduity with their canvass, as the best mode of diverting attention from their important movements, and satisfying the public that the only weapons with which the fight was to be won were—bows, smiles, civil speeches, placards, squibs, banners, and bands of music. Mr. Crafty had received a splendid sum for his services from Lord de la Zouch; but on receiving the first distinct and peremptory intimation from his lordship, through Mr. Delamere, that there was to be *bona fide*, no bribery—and that the only funds placed at his disposal were those sufficient for the *legitimate* expenses of the election—he smiled rather bit-

terly, and sent off a secret express to Fotheringham, to ascertain for what his services had been engaged—for what was the use of going to Waterloo *without powder?*—the answer he received was laconic enough, and verbatim as follows:

"No intimidation; no treating; no bribery; *manœuvre* as skilfully as you can; *and watch the enemy night and day*, so that the close of the poll may not be the close of the election, nor the victor there the sitting member."

To the novel, arduous, and cheerless duty, defined by this despatch from head-quarters, Mr. Crafty immediately addressed all his energies; and, after carefully reconnoitring his position, unpromising as it was, he did not *despair* of success. All his own voters had been gained, upon the whole, fairly. The thirty-six new voters had been undoubtedly under considerable *influence*, of an almost inevitable kind indeed—inasmuch as they consisted of persons principally employed in the way of business by Lord de la Zouch, and by many of his friends and neighbours, all of whom were of his lordship's way of political thinking. Every one of the twenty-three tenants had given a spontaneous and cordial promise; and the seventy "accessibles" had been gained, after a very earnest and persevering canvass, by Mr. Delamere, in company with others who had a pretty decisive and legitimate influence over them. The remaining twenty might, possibly, though not probably, be secured by equally unobjectionable means. That being the state of things with Delamere, how stood matters with Mr. Titmouse? First and foremost, the Quaint Club had been bought at ten pounds a-head, by Gammon—that was all certain. Crafty would also have bought them like a flock of sheep, had he been allowed, and would have managed matters most effectually and secretly; yet not more so than he found Mr. Gammon had succeeded in doing: at all events, as far as he himself personally was concerned. In fact, he had foiled Mr. Crafty, when that gentleman looked about in search of legal evidence of what had been done. Still, however, he did not despair of being able to perform a series of mauœuvres which should secure one of the ends he most wished, in respect even of the Quaint Club.

With equal good intentions, but actuated by a *zeal that*

was not according to knowledge, some of Mr. Gammon's coadjutors had not imitated his circumspection. Quite unknown to him, one or two of them had most fearfully committed him, themselves, and Mr. Titmouse; giving *him* such accounts of their doings as should serve only to secure his applause for their tact and success. Before Mr. Crafty they stood detected as blundering novices in the art of electioneering. A small tinker and brazier at Warkleigh had received, with a wink, ten pounds from a member of Mr. Titmouse's Committee, in payment of an old outstanding account—Heaven save the mark!—delivered in by him three years before, for mending pots, kettles, and saucepans, in the time of—the Aubreys! The wife of a tailor at Grilston received the same sum for a fine tom-cat, which was a natural curiosity, since it could wink each eye separately. A third worthy and independent voter was reminded that he had lent the applicant for his vote ten pounds several years before, and which that gentleman now took shame to himself, as he paid the amount, for having so long allowed it to remain unpaid. Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, with superior astuteness, gave three pounds a-piece to three little boys, sons of a voter, whose workshop overlooked Messrs. Bloodsuck's back offices, on condition that they would desist from their trick of standing and putting their thumbs to their noses at him, as he sate in his office, and which had really become an insupportable nuisance. Here was, therefore, a valuable consideration for the payment, and bribery was out of the question. Such are samples of the ingenious devices which had been resorted to, in order to secure some thirty or forty votes! In short, Mr. Crafty caught them tripping in at least eleven clear, unquestionable cases of bribery, each supported by unimpeachable evidence, and each sufficing to void the election, to disqualify Mr. Titmouse from sitting in that Parliament for Yatton, and to subject both him and his agents to a ruinous amount of penalties.

Then, again, there were clear indications either of a disposition to set at defiance the stringent provisions of the law against treating, or of an ignorance of their existence. And as for *freedom* of election scarcely ten of his tenants gave him a willing vote, or otherwise than

upon compulsion, and after threats of raised rents or expulsion from farms. Tied as were Mr. Crafty's hands, the Quaint Club became a perfect eyesore to him. He found means, however, to open a secret and confidential communication with them, and resolved to hold out to them dazzling but indistinct hopes of pecuniary advantage from the regions of Fotheringham. His emissary soon got hold of the redoubtable Ben Bran, who, truth to say, had long been on the look-out for indications of the desired sort from the other side. As Bran was late one evening walking slowly along the high-road leading to York, he was accosted by a genteel-looking person, who spoke in a low tone, and whom Bran now recollected to have seen, or spoken to, before. "Can you tell me where lies the gold mine?" said the stranger; "at Fotheringham or Yatton?"—and the speaker looked round, apprehensive of being overheard. Ben pricked up his ears, and soon got into conversation with the mysterious stranger; in the course of which the latter threw out, in a very significant manner, that "a certain peer could never be supposed to send a certain near relative into the field, in order that that relative might be beaten, * * * and especially for want of a few pounds; and besides, my friend, when only—* *—eh?—* *—*the other side*"——

"Why, who are you? Where do you come from?" inquired Ben, with a violent start.

"Dropped out of the—*moon*," was the quiet and smiling answer.

"Then I must say they know a precious deal," replied Ben, after a pause, "up there, of what's going on down here."

"To be sure—every thing; every thing!" * * Here the stranger told Ben the precise sum which the club had received from Mr. Gammon.

"Are we both—gentlemen?" inquired the stranger, earnestly.

"Y—e—e—s, I hope so, sir," replied Ben, hesitatingly.

"And men of business—men of our word!"

"Honour among thieves—ay, ay," answered Ben, in a still lower tone, and very eagerly.

"Then let you and me meet *alone*, this time to-morrow, at Darkling Edge; and by that time, do you see, turn this over in your mind," here the stranger twice held up both his hands, with outstretched thumbs and fingers. "Sure we understand each other?" added the stranger. Ben nodded, and they were presently out of sight of each other. The stranger gentleman pulled off his green spectacles, and also a pair of gray whiskers, and put both of them into his pocket. If any one attempted to *dog* him, he must have been led a pretty round! 'Twas in consequence of this interview that Ben made the application to Gammon, which had so disturbed him, and which has been already described. And to return to our friend: what was he to do? On returning to the Hall, he opened a secret drawer in his desk, and took out a thin slip of paper which he had deposited there that morning, it having been then received by him from town, marked "*Private and Cofidential*," and franked "Blossom and Box." 'Twas but a line, and written in a bold hand, but in evident haste; for it had in fact been penned by Lord Blossom and Box while he was sitting in the Court of Chancery, apparently listening to an abstruse argument, to which he had prepared the judgment which he was within a day or two's time to deliver. This is a copy of it:—

"The election *must be won*. You will hear from E— by this post. Don't address any note to *me*.

"B. and B."

With this great man, Lord Chancellor Blossom and Box, when plain Mr. Quicksilver, Mr. Gammon had had a pretty familiar acquaintance, as the reader may easily suppose; and had a natural desire to acquit himself creditably in the eyes of so distinguished and powerful a personage. Gammon had volunteered an assurance to his lordship, shortly before leaving town, that the election was safe, and in his, Gammon's hands; guess then his chagrin and fury at finding the systematic and determined opposition which had suddenly sprung up against him; and the intensity of his desire to defeat it. And the more anxious he was on this score, the more vividly he perceived the necessity of acting with a caution which should insure real ultimate success, instead of a mere noisy and

temporary triumph, which should be afterwards converted into most galling, disgraceful, and public defeat.

The more that Gammon reflected on the sudden but determined manner in which Lord de la Zouch had entered into the contest, the more confident he became that his lordship had an important ultimate object to secure; and that he had at command immense means of every description, Gammon but too well knew, in common with all the world. Was, for instance, Mr. Crafty brought down, at an enormous expense, for nothing? What the deuce were the Quaint Club about? Was there ever any thing so monstrous heard of—ten pounds a man received—the bargain finally struck—and now their original demand suddenly and peremptorily doubled? Venal miscreants! Was the other side really outbidding him, or laying a deep plan for entrapping him into an act of wholesale bribery? In short, were the Quaint Club now actuated by avarice, or by treachery?—Again and again did he go over his list of promises; having marked the *favourable*, *hostile*, *neutral*, *doubtful*, from a table as accurately compiled and classified as that of Mr. Crafty. Like his wily and practised opponent, also, Gammon entrusted his principal movements to scarce a soul of those who were engaged with him; fearing, indeed, though *then* with no definite grounds, that Messrs. Mudflint, Woodlouse, Centipede, Bloodsuck, and Going Gone, were already too deep in the secrets of the election. According to *his* calculations, supposing all his promises to stand, Titmouse was, independently of the Quaint Club, and some eighteen or twenty others whom he had set down as "*to be had*"—only *twenty-five* ahead of Delamere; thus making a difference of eight only between his calculation and that of Crafty. Of course, therefore, that cursed Quaint Club had it all their own way; and how to jockey them was a problem that wellnigh split his head. He gave Lord de la Zouch credit for doing all that he—Gammon—could do, to win the election; and believed him, therefore, capable of buying over any member of the club, to turn king's evidence against their *original* benefactor. The Bloodsucks assured him that the club were all good men and true—stanch—game to the backbone; but Gammon had obtained information as to the political sentiments of several

of the members, before they had acquired the new franchise, and became banded into so sudden and formidable a confederacy, which led him to speculate rather apprehensively on the effects which might follow any bold and skilful scheme which might be resorted to by his enemies.

Now, as far as the club were concerned, its members were all quiet respectable men, who made the affair a dry matter of business. They justly looked on each of the candidates as equally worthy of the honour they coveted of representing the borough, and considered that they would always go on right at head-quarters—*i. e.* that the country would be properly governed—without the least reference to the quality or complexion of the House of Commons. They saw the desperate and unceasing fight going on among their betters for the loaves and fishes; and imitated their example, with reference to the crumbs and fragments. First they divided themselves, as near as their number would admit of, into tens, giving one to the odd nine, equally with each body of ten, and thus produced a body of eleven representatives. These eleven, again, in the presence of the whole club, chose five of their number for the purpose of conducting the negotiations between the club and the two candidates: and these five again selected one of themselves—Ben Bran—to be the actual medium of communication: the actual state of the market never went beyond the first body of eleven; and in the exercise of an exquisite dexterity, Mr. Crafty had contrived to inspire these eleven, through their deputy and mouthpiece, Bran, with a determination to exact *fifteen* pounds per head more from Titmouse, before recording their votes in his favour: and this untoward state of things was duly intimated to Gammon by Ben Bran, by silently outstretching both hands and then one hand. That would make a total of *two thousand seven hundred and twenty-five pounds* disbursed among that accursed Quaint Club alone!—thought Gammon, with a shudder: and suppose they should even then turn tail upon him, seduced by the splendid temptations of Lord de la Zouch? Just to conceive the possibility, for one moment, of Mr. Benjamin Bran having been bought over to betray all his companions, and Gammon and his party also, into the

hands of Lord de la Zouch? Saith the immortal author of *Hudibras*—

> "Ah me, the perils that environ,
> The man that meddles with cold iron!"

But I shall make an exclamation of my own—

> "What pen *his* troubles shall describe,
> Who voters once begins to bribe?"

"Oh!" thought Mr. Gammon, a thousand times, "that cursed Quaint Club! That cursed Crafty!"

The very first person on whom Delamere waited, in order to solicit his support, was little Dr. Tatham, who, I need hardly say, gave it promptly and cordially; but he added, shaking his head, that he knew he was giving huge offence to the people at the Hall, who had already been several times very urgent indeed with him. "Well, rather, sir, than sow dissension between you and Mr. Titmouse, your neighbour," said Delamere, spiritedly, "I at once release you from your promise."

"Ah! indeed?" cried Dr. Tatham, briskly—"Do you? "*Can* you? Ought you to do so? I look upon the exercise of my franchise to be a sacred duty, and I shall discharge it as readily and conscientiously as any other duty, come what may." Delamere looked at him, and thought how often he had heard Miss Aubrey talk of him with affectionate enthusiasm, and he believed the little doctor to be every way worthy of it. "For myself," continued Dr. Tatham, "I care little; but I have reason greatly to apprehend the effects of his displeasure upon those who are disposed—as such I know there are—to go counter to his wishes. He'll make them rue the day"——

"Ay?—Let him!" exclaimed Mr. Delamere, with an eye of bright defiance; but it kindled only a faint momentary spark of consolation in the breast of Dr. Tatham.

The rivals, Mr. Delamere and Mr. Titmouse, encountered one another, as it were in full state, on the second day of the former's canvass. 'Twas in the street. Mr. Delamere was attended by Mr. Parkinson, Sir Percival Pickering, Mr. St. Aubyn, Mr. Aylward Elvet, Mr. Gold, and one or two others. Mr. Delamere looked certainly very handsome. About his person, countenance, and

carriage, there was an air of manly frankness, refinement, and simplicity; and a glance at his aristocratic cast of features, told you that a certain latent tendency to hauteur was kept in check by sincere good-nature. He was tall and well proportioned, and his motions had a natural ease and grace; and as for his dress, it combined a rigid simplicity with an undoubted fashion and elegance. Though the air was very cold and frosty, he wore only a plain dark-coloured surtout, buttoned.

"Delamere! Delamere!" whispered with a smile Mr. St. Aubyn, (one of the former members for the borough,) on first catching sight of the enemy approaching them on the same side of the street, at about twenty yards' distance—"Here comes your opponent: he's a beauty, eh?"

Mr Titmouse walked first, dressed in a fine drab-coloured great-coat, with velvet collar of the same hue, and sable near a foot deep at his wrists. It was buttoned tightly round a pinched-in waist, and a white cambric handkerchief peeped out of a pocket in the breast. He had a red and green plaid waistcoat, and a full satin stock, glistening with little pins and chains. His trousers were sky-blue, and very tight, and covered almost the whole of his boot; so that it was a wonder to the vulgar how he ever got into or out of them. The little that was seen of his boots shone wonderfully; and he wore spurs at his heels. His span-new glossy hat was perched aslant on his bushy hair; he wore lemon-coloured kid gloves, and a delicate little ebony cane. Following this pretty little figure were—the sallow insolent-looking "*Reverend*" Smirk Mudflint, (such was the title he assumed,) Mr. Centipede, Mr. Grogram, Mr. Bloodsuck, junior, (who had approached as near, in point of personal appearance, to his illustrious client, as he knew how,) and—Mr. Gammon.

As the hostile companies neared each other, that of Delamere observed some one hastily whisper to Titmouse, who instantly stuck his chased gold eyeglass into his eye, and stared very vulgarly at Mr. Delamere—who, on passing him, with the courtesy he conceived due to an opponent, took off his hat, and bowed with politeness and grace, his example being followed by all his party. Titmouse, however, took not the least notice of the compliment; but, without removing his glass from his eye,

throwing an odious sneer into his face, stared steadily at Mr. Delamere, and so passed on. Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck ably seconded him. Mudflint, with a bitter smirk, touched his hat slightly; Centipede affected to look another way; Grogram blushed, and bowed as to his very best customer. Mr. Gammon came last; and bursting with disgust at the reception given to Mr. Delamere, coloured all over as he took off his hat, and with an expression of very anxious and pointed politeness, endeavoured to satisfy Mr. Delamere and his party, that there was at all events *one* in the train of Titmouse, who had some pretensions to the character of a gentleman.

"Who *can* that last man be? He's a gentleman," inquired Sir Percival, with an air of much surprise.

"Mr. Gammon—a man who is lord-paramount at the Hall," replied one.

"Gammon!—Is *that* Mr."——echoed Delamere, with much interest; and as he turned round to look at Gammon, observed that Gammon was doing the same; on which both hastily turned away.

As the important day approached, each party *professed* complete confidence as to the result. The *Yorkshire Stingo* declared that it had authority for stating that Mr. Titmouse's majority would be at least three to one over Mr. Delamere—and that, too, in glorious defiance of the most lavish bribery and corruption, the most tyrannical intimidation, that had ever disgraced the annals of electioneering. In fact, it was presumption in Mr. Delamere to attempt to foist himself upon a borough with which he had no connection, and done with a wanton and malicious determination to occasion expense and annoyance to Mr. Titmouse. The *York True Blue*, on the contrary, assured its readers that Mr. Delamere's prospects were of the brightest description—and though by perhaps a small majority, yet he was sure of his election. He had been everywhere hailed with the greatest enthusiasm. Many of even Mr. Titmouse's tenantry had nobly volunteered their support to Mr. Delamere; and at Grilston, so long regarded as the very focus and hot-bed of democracy, his success had surpassed the most sanguine expectations of his friends, and so forth. Then there was a sly and mischievous caution to the electors,

not to be led away by the ingenious and eloquent sophistries which might be expected from Mr. Titmouse at the hustings, on the day of nomination!! All this might be very well for the papers, and probably produce its impression upon those who, at a distance, are in the habit of relying upon them. But as for the actors—the parties concerned—Mr. Delamere was repeatedly assured by Mr. Crafty that a decent minority was the very utmost that could be expected; while Titmouse and his friends, on the other hand, were in a very painful state of uncertainty as to the issue: only Gammon, however, and perhaps one or two others, being acquainted with the true source of uneasiness and difficulty; viz: the abominable rapacity of the Quaint Club.

CHAPTER VI.

At length dawned the day which was to determine how far Yatton was worthy or unworthy of the boon which had been conferred upon it by the glorious Bill for giving Everybody Everything—which was to witness the maiden contest between the two hopeful scions of the noble and ancient houses of Dreddlington and De la Zouch—on which it was to be ascertained whether Yatton was to be bought and sold, like any other article of merchandise, by a bitter old boroughmonger; or to signalize itself by its spirit and independence, in returning one who avowed, and would support, the noble principles which secured the passing of the Great Bill which has been so often alluded to.

As for my hero, Mr. Titmouse, it gives me pain to have to record—making even all due allowance for the excitement occasioned by so exhilarating an occasion—that there were scarcely two hours in the day during which he could be considered as sober. He generally left his bed about eleven o'clock in the morning—about two o'clock reached his committee-room—there he called for a bottle or two of soda water, with brandy; and, thus supported, set out on his canvass, and never refused an invitation to take a glass of good ale at the houses which he visited. About the real business of the election—about his own true position and prospects—Gammon never once deigned to consult or instruct him; but had confined himself to the preparation of a very short and simple speech, to be delivered by Titmouse, if possible, from the hustings, and which he had made Titmouse copy out many times, and *promise* that he would

endeavour to learn off by heart. He might as well have attempted to walk up the outside of the Monument.

Merrily rung the bells of Grilston church, by order of the vicar, the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, who was a stanch Titmouseite, and had long cast a sort of sheep's eye upon the living of Yatton; for he was nearly twenty years younger than its present possessor, Doctor Tatham. What a bustle was there in the town by eight o'clock in the morning! All business was to be suspended for the day. Great numbers from the places adjacent began to pour into the town about that hour. It was soon seen who was the popular candidate—he whose colours were *yellow;* for wherever you went, yellow cockades, rosettes, and button-ties for the men, and yellow ribands for the girls, yellow flags and yellow placards with "TITMOUSE FOR YATTON!" met the eye. Mr. Delamere's colours were a deep blue, but were worn, I am sorry to say, by only one in four or five of those who were stirring about; and who, moreover, however respectable, and in appearance superior to the adherents of Titmouse, yet wore no such look of confidence and cheerfulness as they. From the bow-window of the Hare and Hounds, Mr. Delamere's head-quarters, streamed an ample and very rich blue silk banner, on which was worked, in white silk, the figure of a Bible, Crown, and Sceptre, and the words "Delamere for Yatton." This would have probably secured some little favourable notice from his sullen and bitter opponents, had they known that it had been the workmanship of fifteen of as sweet beautiful girls as could have been picked out of the whole county of York; and, by the way, 'tis a singular and melancholy sign of the times, that beauty, innocence, and accomplishment, are in England to be found uniformly arrayed on the side of tyranny and corruption, against the people. Then Mr. Delamere's *band* was equal to three such as that of his opponent—playing with equal precision and power; and, what was more, they played very bold enlivening tunes as they paraded the town.

There was one feature of the early proceedings of the day, that was rather singular and significant; viz. that though all the members of the formidable QUAINT CLUB were stirring about, *not one of them wore the colours of*

either party, though (between ourselves) each man had the colours of both parties in his pocket. They appeared studiously to abstain from a display of party feeling—though several of them *could* not resist a leering wink of the eye when the yellow band went clashing past them. They had, moreover, a band of their own, which went about the town, preceded by their own standard—a very broad sheet of sky-blue, stretched between two poles, supported by two men: and the droll device it bore, was—an enormous man's face, with an intense squint, and two hands, with the thumbs of each resting on the nose, and the fingers spread out towards the beholder. It produced—as it seemed designed to produce—shouts of laughter wherever it made its appearance. Every member of the Quaint Club wore a grave face; as if they were the only persons who appreciated the nature of the exalted functions which they were about to exercise. No one could tell which way they intended to vote, though all expected that they were to come in at the last, and place the yellows in a triumphant majority of a hundred, at least. Though it had been a matter of notoriety that they were Mr. Titmouse's men, before Mr. Delamere appeared in the field; yet, *since* then, they had suddenly exhibited a politic and persevering silence and reserve, even among their personal friends and acquaintance.

The yellow band performed one feat which was greatly applauded by the yellow crowd which attended them, and evidenced the delicacy by which those who guided their movements were actuated: viz. they frequently passed and repassed Mr. Delamere's committee-room, playing that truly inspiriting air, "The Rogue's March." Then the yellows dressed up a poor old donkey in Mr. Delamere's colours, which were plentifully attached to the animals ears and tail, and paraded him with great cheering before the door of the Hare and Hounds, and Mr. Delamere's principal friends and adherents. Nay—one of the more vivacious of the crowd threw a stone at a little corner window of the blue committee-room, through which it went smashing on its way, till it hit upon the inkstand of calm Mr. Crafty, who sat alone in the little room, busy at work, with pen, ink and paper. He looked

up for a moment, called for a fresh inkstand, and presently resumed his pen as if nothing had happened.

The hustings were erected upon a very convenient and commodious green, at the southern extremity of the town; and thither might be seen, first on its way, a little after eleven o'clock, the procession of the popular candidate—Mr. Titmouse. Here and there might be heard, as he passed, the startling sounds of mimic ordnance, fired by little boys from house-tops. As they passed the church, its bells rung their merriest peal; and, at a little distance further on, the little boys of Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc, each with a small rosette tied to his jacket, struck up a squeaking and enthusiastic "hurrah!" while from the upper windows, the young ladies (three in number) of Mrs. Hic Hæc Hoc's "establishment" waved their little white pocket handkerchiefs. Next on their way, they passed the "*Reverend*" Smirk Mudflint's chapel, which was in very unenviable and queer contiguity to an establishment of a very questionable character—in fact, adjoining it. Against the upper part of the chapel hung a device calculated to arrest, as it *did* arrest, universal attention and admiration —viz. an *inverted* copy of the New Testament; over it, the figure of a church turned upside down, with the point of its steeple resting on the word "Revelation;" and upon the aforesaid church stood proudly erect an exact representation of Mr. Smirk Mudflint's chapel, over which were the words—"Freedom of Opinion! and Truth Triumphant!" But I do not know whether another device, worked by Miss Mudflint—a skinny, tallow-faced, and flinty-hearted young lady of five and twenty—was not still more striking and original; viz. a Triangle, and an Eye with rays, and the words—"*Titmouse! Truth! Peace!*" Three cheers for Mr. Mudflint were given here; and Mr. Mudflint bowed all round with an air of proud excitement—feeling, moreover, an intense desire to stop the procession and make a speech while opposite to his own little dunghill. First in the procession marched a big fellow, with one eye, bearing a flag, with a red cap on a pike, and the words, in large black characters—

"Titmouse or Death!!!
Let Tyrants Tremble!!!!"

Then came the band; and next to them walked—Tittlebat Titmouse, Esq., dressed exactly as he was when he encountered, in their canvass, the party of his opponent, as I have already described—only that he wore a yellow rosette, attached to a button-hole on the left side of his drab great coat. His protuberant light-blue eyes danced with delight, and his face was flushed with excitement. His hat was off and on every moment, in acknowledgment of the universal salutations which greeted him, and which so occupied him that he even forgot to use his eye-glass. On his left hand walked, wrapped up in a plain dark-hued great-coat, a somewhat different person—Mr. Gammon. The expression which his features wore was one of intense anxiety; and any tolerably close observer might have detected the mortification and disgust with which his eye occasionally glanced at and was suddenly withdrawn from, the figure of the grinning idiot beside him.

Who do you think, reader, walked on Mr. Titmouse's right-hand side? Sir Harkaway Rotgut Wildfire, Baronet, whose keen political feelings, added to a sincere desire to secure a chance of his daughter's becoming the mistress of Yatton, had obliterated all unkindly recollection of Mr. Titmouse's gross conduct on a former occasion, after having received, through the medium of Mr. Bloodsuck, senior, as a common friend, a satisfactory apology. Next walked Mr. Titmouse's mover and seconder, the "*Reverend*" Mr. Mudflint, and Going Gone, "*Esquire.*" Then came Mr. Centipede and Mr. Woodlouse, Mr. Grogram and Mr. Ginblossom; Mr. Gargle Glister, and Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck; and others of the leading friends of Mr. Titmouse, followed by some two hundred others, two and two.

Thus passed along the main street of Grilston, in splendid array, what might too truly have been called the *triumphal* procession of the popular candidate; his progress being accompanied by the enlivening music of his band, the repeated acclamations of the excited and intelligent crowd, the waving of banners and flags below, and handkerchiefs and scarfs from the ladies at the windows, and desperate strugglings from time to time, on the part of the crowd, to catch a glimpse of Mr. Titmouse.

Mr. Gammon had the day before "*hired ten pounds' worth of mob*"—a device alone sufficient to have made Mr. Titmouse the popular candidate, and it now told excellently; for the aforesaid ten pounds' worth disposed itself in truly admirable order, in front of the hustings, —and, on Mr. Titmouse making his appearance there, set up a sudden and enthusiastic shout, which rent the air, and was calculated to strike dismay into the heart of the enemy.

Mr. Titmouse, on gaining the hustings, changed colour visibly, and, coming in front, took off his glossy hat, and bowed repeatedly in all directions. Mr. Delamere's procession was of a vastly superior description, yet too palpably that of the unpopular candidate—every member of it, from first to last, having made up his mind to encounter incivility, and even insult, however really anxious to avoid the slightest occasion for it. The band was numerous, and played admirably. There was a profusion of gay and handsome flags and banners. Mr. Delamere walked next to the band, with a gallant bearing, a gay and cheerful smile, yet oft darkened by anxiety as he perceived indubitable symptoms of a disposition to rough treatment on the part of the crowd. On his right-hand side walked Mr. St. Aubyn; on his left, Sir Percival Pickering, the late member for the borough. Following them came Mr. Gold, the banker, and Mr. Milnthorpe, an extensive and highly respectable flour factor—these being Mr. Delamere's mover and seconder; and they were followed by at least three hundred others, two and two, all of substantial and respectable appearance, and most resolute air to boot. No amount of mob that day in Grilston would have ventured an attack, in passing, upon that stout-hearted body of yeomen.

A great many white handkerchiefs were waved from the windows, as Delamere passed along—waved by the hands of hundreds of fair creatures, whose hearts throbbed with fond fears lest an unoffending gentleman should be maltreated by the mob. When Mr. Delamere approached a large bow window, opposite to the town-hall, his heart began to beat quickly. There were four as beautiful and high-born young women as England could have produced—all gazing down upon him with eager

and anxious looks. It was not they, however, who occasioned Mr. Delamere's emotion. He knew that in that room was Lady de la Zouch—*his mother;* and he grew silent and excited as he approached it. One of the loveliest of the four, as he stopped and with respectful bow looked up for an instant—Lady Alethea Larymer—suddenly and quite unexpectedly stepped aside; and there stood revealed the figure of Lady de la Zouch. She would have waved her handkerchief, but that she required it to conceal her emotion. The lips of neither mother nor son moved; but their *hearts* uttered reciprocal benedictions—and Delamere passed on. As he neared the church, I regret to have it to put on record, but, at the bidding of the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, the bells *tolled as for a funeral!!*

Could any thing have been more lamentable and disgusting? If the sudden and unexpected sight of his mother had been in any degree calculated to subdue, for a moment, his feelings, what ensued within a minute or two afterwards was sufficient to excite his sternest mood; for as soon as ever the head of his procession became visible to the crowd on the green, there arose a tremendous storm of yelling, hooting, hissing, and groaning: and when Mr. Delamere made his appearance in front of the hustings, you might have imagined that you were witnessing the reception given to some loathsome miscreant mounting the gallows to expiate with his life a dreadful crime. He advanced, nevertheless, with a smile of cheerful resolution and good-humour, though he changed colour a little; and, taking off his hat, bowed in all directions. Gracious heaven! what a contrast he presented to his popular rival, Mr. Titmouse, who stood grinning and winking to the wretches immediately underneath, evidently with a spiteful gratification at the treatment which his opponent was experiencing. Any one on the hustings or in the crowd had but to call out "Three cheers for Mr. Titmouse!" to be instantly obeyed; then "Three *groans* for the young boroughmonger!" were responded to with amazing vehemence and effect.

Viewed from a distance sufficient to prevent your observing the furious faces of the dense mob, and hearing the opprobrious epithets which were levelled against the

unpopular candidate, the scene appeared both interesting and exciting. On the outskirts of the crowd were to be seen a great number of carriages, both close and open, principally occupied by ladies—and I need hardly say who was the favourite in *those* quarters. Then the rival bands moved continually about, playing well known national airs; while the banners and flags, blue and yellow, heightened the exhilarating and picturesque effect of the whole. The hustings were strong and commodious; Mr. Titmouse and his friends stood on the right, Mr. Delamere and his friends on the left side. He was dressed in a simple dark blue surtout and plain black stock. He was tall, elegant, and easy in his person, appearance, and gestures; his countenance was prepossessing, and bespoke a little excitement, which did not, however, obscure its good-nature. And beside him stood his mover and seconder, Mr. Gold and Mr. Milnthorpe; the two late members; and about twenty or thirty other gentlemen—the whole party forming such a strong contrast to their opponents, as must have challenged any one's observation in an instant.

Titmouse stood in the centre, leaning (as he supposed) gracefully against the front bar; on his right stood the burly, slovenly figure of Sir Harkaway Rotgut Wildfire, with his big, bloated, blotchy face: on Mr. Titmouse's left stood his proposer, the "Reverend" Mr. Smirk Mudflint. His lean, sallow face wore a very disagreeable and bitter expression, which was aggravated by a sinister cast of one of his eyes. He was dressed in black, with a white neck-kerchief and no shirt collars. Next to him stood Going Gone, Esq., Mr. Titmouse's seconder, with a ruddy complexion, light hair, a droll eye, and an expression of coarse but by no means ill-natured energy. Gammon stood immediately behind Titmouse, into whose ear he whispered frequently and anxiously. There were also the Reverend Gideon Fleshpot, (though he evidently did not wish to make himself conspicuous,) Mr. Glister, Mr. Grogram, Mr. Woodlouse, Mr. Centipede, Mr. Ginblossom, Mr. Hic Hæc Hoc, the Messrs. Bloodsuck, father and son.

The business of the day having been opened with the ordinary formalities by the returning officer, he earnestly

besought the assembled multitude to remember that they were Englishmen, and to give both parties fair play, allowing every one who might address them from the hustings, to be heard without serious interruption. It had been arranged between the two committees that Mr. Titmouse should be first proposed; and the moment, therefore, that the returning officer ceased speaking, the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint took off his hat and prepared to address the "electors;" but he had to wait for at least a minute in order that the applause with which he had been greeted might subside, during which little anxious interval, he could not help directing towards his opponent a look of bitter exultation. He spoke with the self-possession, fluency, and precision of a practised public speaker. If the day's proceedings were to take their tone from that of the opening speech, 'twas a thousand pities that it fell to the lot of the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint to deliver it. He had so clear a voice, spoke with such distinctness and deliberation, and amidst such silence, that every word he uttered was audible all over the crowd; and any thing more unchristian, uncourteous, unfair towards his opponents, and calculated to excite towards them the hatred of the crowd, could hardly have been conceived.

In what offensive and indecent terms he spoke of the Established Church and its ministers! of the aristocracy, ("those natural tyrants," he said,) and indeed of all the best and time-hallowed institutions of dear glorious old England—which might well blush to own such a creature as he, as one entitled by birth to call himself one of her sons! How he hailed the approaching downfall of priestcraft and king-craft!—"A new light," he said, "was diffusing itself over benighted mankind—'twas the pure and steady light of Reason, and all filthy things were flying from before it," (immense cheers followed the announcement of so important and interesting a fact.) He said, "the Bible was a book of excellent common sense; and nothing but villanous priestcraft had attempted to torture and dislocate it into all sorts of fantastic mysteries, which led to rank idolatry and blasphemy, equally revolting to God and man." (Perceiving that this was going a *little* too rapidly ahead, from the coolness with which it was received, he dropped that subject altogether, and soon

regained the ear of his audience, by descanting in very declamatory and inflammatory terms upon the resplendent victory which the people had recently gained in the glorious Bill for giving Everybody Everything.) "They had burst their bonds with a noble effort; but their chains would be quickly re-riveted, unless they followed up their advantage, and never stopped short of crushing a heartless and tyrannical and insolent oligarchy; unless the people were now true to themselves, and returned to the House of Commons good men and true, to watch over the energies of reviving liberty, lest they should be strangled in their way—(the remainder of the sentence was inaudible in the storm of applause which it excited.) Under these circumstances Providence itself had pointed out an individual whom he was proud and happy to propose to their notice—(here he turned and bowed to Mr. Titmouse, who, plucking off his hat, bobbed in return, and blushed, amidst the deafening cheers of all before them, to whom also he bowed repeatedly.) A gentleman who seemed—as it were—made for them; who, in his own person, might be said to afford a lively illustration of the regeneration of society—who, to borrow for a moment an absurd word from his opponents, had by a sort of *miracle* (with what an infernal emphasis he pronounced this word!) been placed where he was, in his present proud position; who had totally and happily changed the whole aspect of affairs in the neighbourhood, which had already become the scene of his profuse and yet discriminating generosity and hospitality; who stood in bright and bold relief from out a long gloomy line of ancestors, all of whom had lived and died in enmity to the people—also who had distinguished themselves by nothing except their bigotry and hatred of civil and religious liberty.

"Mr. Titmouse was the first of his ancient family to claim the proud title of—The Man of the People. (Here a voice called out, "three cheers for Mr. Titmouse!"—which were given spontaneously, and most effectively.) His '*address*' was worthy of him—it did equal honour to his head and his heart, (it is impossible to describe the smile which here just glanced over the countenance of Mr. Gammon)—touching nothing that it did not adorn—

at once bold, comprehensive, uncompromising!—He had had the felicity of enjoying the acquaintance, he might venture, perhaps to say the friendship, of Mr. Titmouse, since he had taken up his abode at the home of his ancestors, and very proud he was to be able to say so. He could assure the electors, from his own personal knowledge of Mr. Titmouse, that they would have cause to be proud of their future representative—of the choice which they were about to make. (Here the worthy speaker had some sudden misgivings as to the display likely to be made by Titmouse, when it came to his turn to address the electors:—so he added in *rather* a subdued tone)—It was true that they might not have, in Mr. Titmouse, a magpie in the House, (*laughter;*) a mere chatterer—much cry and little wool; they had had enough of mere speechifiers at St. Stephen's—but they would have a good working member, (*cheers;*) one always at his post in the hour of danger, (*cheers;*) a good committee-man, and one whose princely fortune rendered him independent of party and of the blandishments of power. In the language of the ancient *poet* (*!*) Mr. Mudflint would exclaim on such an occasion, '*Facta, non verba quæro,*' (*great cheering.*) And now a word for his opponent, (*groans.*) He was a mere puppet, held in the hands of some one out of sight, (*laughter*)—it *might* be of a base old boroughmonger. (*groans,*) who sought to make Yatton a rotten borough, (*hisses,*) a stepping-stone to ascendency in the county, (cries of "Will he, though, lad, eh?") who would buy and sell them like slaves, (*hisses,*) and would never rest satisfied until he had restored the intolerable old vassalage of feudalism, (groans and hisses here burst forth from that enlightened assemblage, at the idea of any thing so frightful.) He meant nothing personally offensive to the honourable candidate—but *was* he worthy of a moment's serious notice? (*great laughter.*) Had he an opinion of his own? (*loud laughter.*) Had he not better, to use the language of a book that was much misunderstood, *tarry at Jerusalem* (*!!!*) *till his beard was grown?* Was he not, in fact, a nonentity, unworthy of a reasonable man's serious notice? Was he not reeking from Oxford, (*groans*) that hot-bed of pedantic ignorance and venerable bigotry, (*hootings,*) surrounded by a dismal and lurid halo of superstition?"

Finer and finer was Mr. Mudflint becoming every moment as he warmed with his subject—but unfortunately his audience was beginning very unequivocally to intimate that they were quite satisfied with what they had already heard. A cry for instance was heard—"The rest of my discourse next Sunday!"—for the crowd knew that they were kept all this while from one of their greatest favourites, Mr. Going Gone, who had also himself been latterly rather frequently and significantly winking his eye and shrugging his shoulders. Mr. Mudflint, therefore, with feelings of vivid vexation, pique, and envy, concluded rather abruptly by proposing Tittlebat Titmouse, Esquire, of Yatton, as a fit and proper person to represent them in Parliament. Up went hats into the air, and shouts of the most joyous and enthusiastic description rent the air for several minutes.

Then took off his hat the jolly Mr. Going Gone—a signal for roars of laughter, and cries of coarse and droll welcome, in expectancy of fun. Nor were they disappointed. He kept them in good-humour and fits of laughter during the whole of his "address;" and though destitute of any pretence to refinement, I must say that I could not detect any traces of real ill-nature in it. He concluded by seconding the nomination of Mr. Titmouse, amidst tumultuous cheers; and, after waiting for some few minutes in order that they might subside, Mr. Gold took off his hat, and essayed to address the crowd. Now he was really what he looked, an old man of unaffected and very great good-humour and benevolence, and that, too, was extensive and systematic. He had only the week before distributed soup, blankets, coals, and potatoes to two hundred poor families in the borough, even as he had done at that period of the year for many years before. No tale of distress was ever told him in vain, unless palpably fictitious and fraudulent. The moment that his bare head, scantily covered with gray hairs, was visible, there arose, at a given signal from Mr. Barnabas Bloodsuck, a dreadful hissing and hooting from all parts of the crowd. If he appeared disposed to persevere in addressing the two or three immediately around him, that only infuriated the mob against the poor old man, who bore it all, however, with great good-humour and fortitude. But it was in vain. After some twenty minutes

spent in useless efforts to make himself audible, he concluded, in mere dumb show, by proposing the Honourable Geoffry Lovel Delamere, at the mention of whose name there again arose a perfect tempest of howling, hissing, groaning, and hooting.

Then Mr. Milnthorpe came forward, determined not to be "*put down.*" He was a very tall and powerfully-built man; bold and determined, with a prodigious power of voice, and the heart of a lion. "Now, lads, I'm ready to try which can tire the other out first!" he roared, in a truly stentorian voice, that was heard over all their uproar, which it *redoubled.* How vain the attempt! How ridiculous the challenge! Confident of his lungs, he smiled good-humouredly at the hissing and bellowing mass before him, and for half an hour persevered in his attempts to make himself heard. At length, however, without his having in the slightest degree succeeded, his pertinacity began to irritate the crowd, who, in fact, felt themselves being *bullied,* and *that* no crowd that ever I saw or heard of can bear for one instant; and *what is one against so many?* Hundreds of fists were held up and shaken at him. A missile of some sort or another was flung at him, though it missed him; and then the returning officer advised him to desist from his attempts, lest mischief should ensue; on which he shouted at the top of his voice, "I second Mr. Delamere!" and amidst immense groaning and hissing replaced his hat on his head, thereby owning himself vanquished, which the mob also perceiving, they burst into loud and long-continued laughter.

"Now, Mr. Titmouse," said the returning officer, on hearing whose words the gentleman he addressed turned as white as a sheet of paper, and felt very much disposed to be sick. He pulled out of his coat-pocket a well-worn little roll of paper, on which was the speech which Mr. Gammon had prepared for him, as I have already intimated; and with a shaking hand unrolled it, casting at its contents a glance—momentary and despairing. What then would that little fool have given for memory, voice, and manner enough to "speak the speech that had been set down for him!" He cast a dismal look over his shoulder at Mr. Gammon, and took off his hat—Sir Harkaway clapping him on the back, exclaiming, "Now for't.

lad—have at 'em and away—never fear!" The moment that he stood bareheaded, and prepared to address the writhing mass of faces before him, he was greeted with a prodigious shout—hats, some waved, others flung into the air—and it was two or three minutes before the uproar abated in the least. With fearful rapidity, however, every species of noise and interruption ceased—and a perfect silence prevailed. The sea of eager excited faces—all turned towards *him*—was a spectacle that might for a moment have shaken the nerves of even a *man*—had he been "unaccustomed to public speaking." The speech, which—brief and simple as it was—he had never been able to make his own, even after copying it out half-a-dozen times, and trying to learn it off for an hour or two daily during the preceding fortnight, he had now utterly forgotten; and he would have given a hundred pounds to retire at once from the contest, or sink unperceived under the floor of the hustings.

"Begin! Begin!" whispered Gammon earnestly.

"Ya—a—a—s—but—what shall I say?"—stammered Titmouse.

"Your speech," answered Gammon, impatiently.

"I—I—'pon my—soul—I've—forgot every word of it!"

"Then *read* it," said Gammon, in a furious whisper—"Good God! you'll be hissed off the hustings!—Read from the paper, do you hear?"—he added, almost gnashing his teeth.

Matters having come to this fearful issue, "Gentlemen," he commenced faintly——

"Hear him! Hear, hear!—Hush! Ts!—Ts!" cried the impatient and expectant crowd.

Now, I happen to have a short-hand writer's notes of every word uttered by Titmouse, together with an account of the reception it met with: and I shall give the reader, first, Mr. Titmouse's *real*, and secondly, Mr. Titmouse's *supposed* speech, as it appeared two or three days afterwards in the columns of the *Yorkshire Stingo*.

Mr. Titmouse's actual Speech.

"Gentlemen—Most uncommon, unaccustomed as I am, (*cheers*) happy—memorable—proudest—high honour—unworthy, (*cheering*)—day of my life—important crisis, (*cheers*)—day gone by, and arrived—too late (*cheering*)—civil and religious liberty all over the world, (*immense cheering, led off by Mr. Mudflint.*) Yes, gentlemen—I could observe—it is unnecessary to say—passing of that truly glorious Bill—charter—Britons never shall be slaves, (*enthusiastic cheers*)—Gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am to address an assembly of this—ahem, (*hear! hear! hear! and cheers*) civil and religious liberty all over the world, (*cheers*)—yet the tongue can feel where the heart cannot express the (*cheers*)—universal suffrage and cheap and enlightened equality (*cries of that's it, lad*) which can never fear to see established in this country (*cheers*)—if only true to—industrious classes and corn-laws—yes, gentlemen, I say corn laws for I am of op——(*hush! hear him! silence!*) working out the principles which conduced to the establishment a—a—a—civil and religious liberty of the press! (*cheers*) and the working classes, (*hush!*)—Gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am—well—at any rate—will you—I say—*will* you? (*vehement cries of No! No! Never!*) unless you are true to yourselves! Gentlemen, without going into—Vote by Ballot (*cheers*) and quarterly Parliaments, (*loud cheering*)—three polar stars of my public conduct—(here the great central banner was waved to and fro, amidst enthusiastic cheering)—and reducing the overgrown Church Establishment to a—difference between me and my honourable opponent, (*loud cheers and groans*)—I live among you, (*cheers*)—money in the borough, (*cheers*)—no business to come here, (*No, no!*)—right about, close borough, (*hisses*)—patient attention, which I will not further trespass upon, (*hear! hear! and loud cheering*)—full explanation—rush early to the—base, bloody, and brutal (*cheers*)—poll triumphant—extinguish for ever, (*cheers.*)—Gentlemen, these are my sentiments—wish you many happy—re—hem! ahem—and by early displaying a determination to—(*cries of 'we will, we will,'*)—eyes of the whole country upon you—crisis of our national representation—patient attention—latest day of my life"

Mr. Titmouse's reported Speech.

"Silence being restored, Mr. Titmouse said, that he feared it was but too evident that he was unaccustomed to scenes so exciting as the present one—that was one source of his embarrassment; but the greatest was, the enthusiastic reception with which he was honoured, and of which he owned himself quite unworthy, (*cheers.*) He agreed with the gentleman who had proposed him in so very able and powerful a speech, (*cheers,*) that we had arrived at a crisis in our national history, (*cheering*)—a point at which it would be ruin to go back, while to stand still was impossible, (*cheers;*) and, therefore, there was nothing for it but to go forward, (*great cheering.*) He looked upon the passing of the Bill for giving Everybody Everything, as establishing an entirely new order of things, (*cheers*) in which the people had been roused to a sense of their being the only legitimate source of power, (*cheering.*) They had, like Samson, though weakened by the cruelty and torture of his tyrants, bound down and broken into pieces the gloomy fabric of aristocracy. The words 'Civil and Religious Liberty' were now no longer a by-word and a reproach (*cheers;*) but as was finely observed by the gentleman who so eloquently proposed him to their notice, the glorious truth had gone forth to the ends of the earth, that no man was under any responsibility for his opinions or his belief, any more than for the shape of his nose (*loud cheers.*) A spirit of tolerance, amelioration, and renovation was now abroad, actively engaged in repairing our defective and dilapidated constitution, the relic of a barbarous age—with some traces of modern beauty, but more of ancient ignorance and unsightliness, (*cheers.*) The great Bill he alluded to had roused the *masses* into political being, and made them sensible of the necessity of keeping down a rapacious and domineering oligarchy. Was not the liberty of the press placed now upon an intelligible and imperishable basis?—Already were its purifying and invigorating influences perceptible, (*cheering*) — and he trusted that it would never cease to direct its powerful energies to the demolition of the many remaining barriers to the improvement of mankind, (*cheers.*) The corn-laws must be repealed, the taxes must be low-

ered, the army and navy reduced; vote by ballot and universal suffrage conceded, and the quarterly meeting of Parliament secured. He found that there were three words on his banner, which were worth a thousand speeches—*Peace*, *Retrenchment*, *Reform*,—which had been happily observed by the gentleman who had so ably proposed him"——

And so on for a column more, in the course of which there were so many flattering allusions to the opening speech of the proposer of Titmouse, that it has often occurred to me as probable, that the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint had supplied the above report of Mr. Titmouse's speech.

With this Mr. Titmouse made a number of profound bows, and replaced his hat upon his head, amidst prolonged and enthusiastic cheering, which, on Mr. Delamere's essaying to address the crowd, was suddenly converted into a perfect hurricane of hissing; like as we now and then find a shower of rain suddenly change into hail. Mr. Delamere stood the pitiless pelting of the storm with calmness, resolution, and good humour. Ten minutes had elapsed, and he had not been allowed to utter one syllable audible to any one beyond four or five feet from him. Every fresh effort he made to speak caused a renewal of the uproar, and many very offensive and opprobrious epithets were applied to him. Surely this was disgraceful, disgusting! What had he done to deserve such treatment? Had he been guilty of offering some gross indignity and outrage to every person present, individually, could he have fared worse than he did? He had conducted his canvass with scrupulous and exemplary honour and integrity—with the utmost courtesy to all parties, whether adverse or favourable. He was surely not deficient in those qualities of head and of heart—of personal appearance, even, which usually secure man favour with his fellows. *Who* could lay *any thing* to his charge—except that he had ventured to solicit the suffrages of the electors of Yatton, in competition with Mr. Titmouse? If men of a determined character and of princely means have to calculate upon such brutal usage

as this, can those who sanction or perpetrate it wonder at bribery and other undue means being resorted to, in absolute self-defence? Is it meant to deter any one from coming forward that has not a forehead of brass, and heart of marble? After upwards of a quarter of an hour had been thus consumed, without Mr. Delamere's having been permitted to utter two consecutive sentences, though he stood up against it patiently and gallantly, the returning officer, who had often appealed to them in vain, earnestly besought Mr. Titmouse to use his influence with the crowd, in order to secure Mr. Delamere a moment's hearing.

"'Pon my life—I—eh?" quoth Titmouse. "A likely thing! He'd do it for *me*, would'nt he? Every man for himself—all fair at an election, eh, Gammon?"

"Do it, sir!" whispered Gammon, indignantly—"do it, and instantly—or you are not worthy of the name of gentleman!" Titmouse, on this, took off his hat, with a very bad grace, and addressing the crowd, said, "I—I—suppose you'll hear what he's got to say for himself, gents" —— But all was in vain: "Off! off! No!—Go home! —ah!—ah!—a—a—a—h!——St!—St!—Get away home with you, you young boroughmonger!—a—a—h!" came in louder and fiercer tones from the mob. Yet Mr. Delamere did not like to give up without another and desperate effort to catch the ear of the mob; but while he was in the act of raising his right hand, and exclaiming—"Gentlemen, only a word or two—I pledge my honour that I will not keep you three minutes"—some barbarous miscreant, from the body of the crowd, aimed at him a stone, not a very large one to be sure, yet flung with very considerable force, and hit him just about the centre of the upper lip, which it cut open. He instantly turned pale, and applied to it his white pocket-handkerchief, which was speedily stained with blood which issued copiously from the wound, and must have greatly gratified the crowd. Still the gallant young fellow stood his ground with firmness, and the smile which he endeavoured to assume was enough to have brought tears into one's eyes to witness. The instant that Gammon had seen the stone take effect, he rushed over towards where Mr. Delamere

stood amidst his agitated friends, who were dissuading him from persevering in his attempt to address the crowd.

"You are severely hurt, sir!" exclaimed Gammon, with much agitation, taking off his hat with an air of earnest and respectful sympathy. Then he turned with an air of excitement towards the crowd, who seemed shocked into silence by the incident which had taken place, and were uttering increasing cries of "shame! shame!"

"Shame?—shame, *shame*, indeed, gentleman"—he exclaimed vehemently—"Where is that atrocious miscreant? In the name of Mr. Titmouse, who is too much agitated to address you himself, I conjure you to secure that abominable ruffian, and let him be brought to justice! If not, Mr. Titmouse protests solemnly that he will withdraw from the election."

"Bravo, Titmouse! bravo! Spoke like a man!" exclaimed several voices. A desperate struggle was soon perceived about that quarter where the man who flung the stone must have been standing; he had been seized, and being in a trice most severely handled, a couple of men almost throttled him with the tightness of their grasp round his neck—these two the very men who had encouraged him to perpetrate the outrage!—and, amidst a shower of kicks and blows, he was hauled off, and deposited, half dead, in the cage.

"Three cheers for Delamere!" cried a voice from the crowd; and never had a more vehement shout issued from them than in response to that summons.

"Delamere! Delamere!—Hear him!—Speak out!—Delamere!" cried a great number of voices, of people growing more and more excited as they beheld his handkerchief becoming suffused with blood. But he was not in a condition then to respond to their call. He was suffering really not a little pain; and moreover, his feelings had for a moment—just for a moment—given way, when he adverted to the possibility that Lady de la Zouch might have witnessed the outrage, or received exaggerated accounts of it. Mr. St. Aubyn, however, stood forward in Mr. Delamere's stead—and in a very feeling and judicious but brief address, roused the feelings of the crowd to a high pitch of sympathy for Mr. Delamere, who stood beside him, hat in hand—vehemently, and at length suc-

cessfully, struggling to repress his rising emotions. If only one out of a hundred of those present had had a vote, this little incident might have changed the fate of the election.

The returning officer then proceeded to call for a show of hands, on which a very great number were held up in favour of Mr. Titmouse; but when Mr. Delamere's name was called, it really seemed as if every one present had extended both his hands—there could be no mistake, no room for doubt. Titmouse turned as pale as a sheet, and gazed with an expression of ludicrous consternation at Gammon, who also looked, in common indeed with his whole party, not a little disconcerted. The returning officer, having procured silence, declared that the choice of the electors had fallen upon Mr. Delamere, on which a tremendous cheering followed, which lasted for several minutes; and, luckily recollecting the utter nullity of a show of hands as a test or evidence, either way, of the result of the election,* Mr. Gammon directed Mudflint formally to demand a poll in behalf of Mr. Titmouse; on which the returning officer announced that the poll would take place at eight o'clock the next morning: and thereupon the day's proceedings closed. Mr. Delamere, in a very few words, returned thanks to the electors for the honour they had conferred upon him, and entreated them to go early to the poll. He and his friends then left the hustings. His procession quickly formed; his band struck up with extraordinary energy and spirit—"*See the conquering hero comes!*" but the rolling of the drums, the clashing of cymbals, the rich deep tones of the bassoons, trombones, and French horns, and clear and lively tones of flute and clarionette, were quite overpowered by the acclamations of the crowd which attended them to Mr. Delamere's committee room.

Sir Percival Pickering, throwing open the bow-window of the committee-room, addressed a word or two to the immense crowd, and then, having given three lusty cheers, they withdrew. A glass of weak wine and water quickly

* "The show of hands," (says Lord Stowell, in *Anthony* v. *Seager*, 1 Hag. Cons. Rep. 13) "is only a rude and imperfect declaration of the sentiments of the electors."

refreshed the spirits of Mr. Delamere, and a surgeon having arrived, found it necessary only to direct that a little piece of court plaster should be applied to the upper lip, assuring him that by the morning no disfiguring traces of the accident would be visible. As for Mr. Crafty, as soon as he heard what had taken place, he uttered, as he felt bound to do, a few casual expressions of sympathy; but what passed through his *thoughts*, as he resumed his seat before his papers, was—"What a pity that all those fellows had not had votes, and that the poll had not commenced *instanter!*" The truly unexpected issue of the day's proceedings, while it elevated the spirits of all Mr. Delamere's friends, produced only one effect upon the imperturbable Mr. Crafty; he strongly suspected that the other side would brobably be resorting during the night to measures of a desperate and unscrupulous description, in order to counteract the unfavourable impression calculated to be effected by the defeat of Mr. Titmouse at the show of hands. As for that gentleman, by the way, he became very insolent towards Gammon on reaching the committee-room, and protested, with fury in his face, that it had all been brought about by the "cursed officious meddling with Mr. Titmouse's name before the mob after the stone had been thrown;" on hearing which, "Go on to the Hall, sir, dine, and get drunk if you choose," said Gammon, bitterly and peremptorily; "I shall remain here all night. Powerful as are your energies, they require relaxation after the fatigues of the day!" and with a very *decisive*, but not violent degree of force, Titmouse was in a twinkling in the outer committee-room. Mr. Gammon had, indeed, as much serious work before him that night as Mr. Crafty, and prepared for secret and decisive action every whit as calmly and effectively as he. Mr. Crafty's arrangements were admirable. During the day he had parcelled out the borough into a number of small departments, each of which he committed to some steady and resolute friend of Mr. Delamere, who was to look after every elector in his division about whom there was the least fear, in respect either of apprehended violent abduction, or of treachery. These gentlemen were to be relieved at intervals; and from one to the other of them, perpetually, were the personal agents of Crafty to go their

rounds, in order to see that all was right, and carry any intelligence to head-quarters.

Then others were intrusted with the ticklish and tiresome duty of watching the movements of the enemy in quarters where Crafty had sure information of intended operations during the night. Complete arrangements had been made, also, for bringing up voters to the poll at the exact times, and in the numbers, and in the manner, which might on the morrow be determined on by Mr. Crafty. Names were noted down of those to whom the bribery oath was to be administered. Prudent as were these precautions, they did not entirely prevent the mischief against which they were levelled. As the night wore on, evidence was, from time to time brought in to Mr. Crafty that the enemy were at work—at their expected tricks.

"Jacob Jolliffe is missing. Wife *says* she knows nothing about him. *Enquire.*"

"Send *at least a couple* of men to watch Peter Jiggins, or he'll be out of the way when he's wanted."

"Haste—haste. G. Atkins and Adam Hutton, both safe ten minutes ago, are off; enticed out into a post-chaise—gone towards York.—(Half past eleven.")

"Send some one to the Jolly Snobs to watch the treating going on.—*Most important.* Mr. Titmouse has been there, and drunk a glass of rum with them."

Then more mysterious missives made their appearance from Mr. Crafty's own familiars.

"Q. C. S. H. O.—12."—(*i. e.* "The Quaint Club still holds out.—Twelve o'clock.")

"Q. C. *G. W.*—½ p. 1."—(*i. e.* "The Quaint Club are *going wrong*.—Half-past one o'clock.)

"S. B.; G. O. ☞ ☞ + ☞ ☞ H. ¼ to 2."—(*i. e.* "I have seen Bran. Gammon offers ten pounds, in addition to the ten pounds already given.—They hesitate.—A quarter to two o'clock.")

"$\frac{3}{\text{heard}}$ & *S.* B. & M. w. B. O. Q. C. 12—3."—*i. e.* "Three of our people have just overheard *and seen* Bloodsuck and Mudflint, with Bran, offering the Quaint Club *twelve* pounds.—Three o'clock.")

"Q. C. G. R. w. *Y.* & C. T. T. *Y. M. S. I.*—4."—(*i. e.* "The Quaint Club are getting restive with *you*, and coming to terms with Titmouse. You must stir instantly. —Four o'clock.")

"ΔΔ ☞ 10 m. 4."—These mysterious symbols caused Mr. Crafty instantly to bestir himself. He changed colour a *little*, and went into the adjoining room. The meaning of the communication was—*Great danger to both parties.*

In the adjoining room, where two candles were burning down in their very sockets, and the fire nearly out, were some four or five trusty friends of Mr. Delamere—gentlemen who had placed themselves entirely at Mr. Crafty's service throughout the night. When he entered, they were all nearly asleep, or at least dozing. Beckoning two of them into his own room, he instructed one of them to go and plant himself openly, as conspicuously as possible, near the door of Mr. Titmouse's committee-room, so as not to fail of being recognised by any one leaving or entering it, as a well-known friend of Mr. Delamere's; in fact, they were to discover that their motions were watched. The other he instructed to act similarly opposite the door of a small house, in a narrow court—the residence, in fact, of Ben Bran, where all the night's negotiations with the Quaint Club had been carried on. Immediately afterwards Mr. Crafty felt it his duty, as between man and man, to warn his opponent of the mortal peril in which he was placed; and found means to convey the following note into the committee-room where Mr. Gammon and one or two others were sitting:

"Take care!! You are deceived! betrayed! Q. C. is sold out and out to the *Blues!!* And part of the bargain, that B. B. shall betray you into bribery in the presence of witnesses—*not one man* of the club safe; this have *just learned* from the wife of one of them. From a well-wishing friend, but *obligated* to vote (against his conscience) for the Blues.

"P. S.—Lord D. in the town with lots of *the needful*, and doing business sharply."

While Mr. Gammon and his companions were canvassing this letter, in came the two gentlemen who had

been watched, in the way I have stated, from Ben Bran's house to Mr. Titmouse's committee room, pale and agitated, with intelligence of that fact. Though hereat Gammon's colour deserted his cheek, he affected to treat the matter very lightly, and laughed at the idea of being deluded by such boy's play. If Lord de la Zouch had hired Crafty only to play tricks like *these*, he might as well have saved the trouble and expense. Here a slight bustle was heard at the door; and the ostler made his appearance, saying that a man had just given him what he produced to Mr. Gammon; who, taking from the ostler a dirty and ill-folded paper, read as follows:

"To Squire Titmous. you Are All Wrong. the blues is *wide* Awake All Night and nos all, Lord Dillysoush about with One hundred Spies; And look Out for traiters in the Camp. A friend or Enemy as you Will, but loving Fair Play."

"Poh!" exclaimed Gammon, flinging it on the table contemptuously.

CHAPTER VII.

Now, I may as well mention here, that about nine o'clock in the evening, Mr. Parkinson brought to Crafty *sure* intelligence that a very zealous and influential fellow, who was entirely in the confidence of the enemy, had come to him a little while before, and candidly disclosed the very melancholy position of his financial affairs; and Mr. Parkinson happened to be in a condition to verify the truth of the man's statement, that there was a writ out against him for £250, and unless he could meet it he would have to quit the county before daybreak, and his very promising prospects in business would be utterly ruined. Mr. Parkinson happened to know these matters professionally; and, in short, Crafty was given to understand that so disgusted was Mr. M'Do'em with Whig principles (his inexorable creditor being a Whig) and practices such as the bribery, treating, and corruption at that moment going on, that—his conscience pricked him—and—ahem!—the poor penitent was ready to make all the amends in his power by discovering villany to its intended victims. Crafty having felt the ground pretty safe underneath him, took upon himself to say, that Mr. M'Do'em need be under no further apprehension as to his pecuniary liabilities; but, in the mean while, he would certainly wish for a little *evidence* of the *bona fides* of his present conduct.

"Come," quoth M'Do'em, after receiving a pregnant wink from Mr. Crafty—"send some one whom you can rely upon with me *immediately*, to do as I bid him—and let him tell you."

No sooner said than done. A trusty managing clerk of Mr. Parkinson's forthwith accompanied M'Do'em on a

secret expedition. * * * They stood at a window, with a broken pane. 'Twas a small ill-furnished kitchen, and in the corner, close to the fire, sate smoking a middle-aged man, in a paper cap. Opposite to him sate two persons, in very earnest conversation with him. They were Mr. Mudflint and Mr. Bloodsuck, junior.

"Come, come, *that's* decidedly unreasonable," quoth the former.

"No, Sir, it *an't.* It quite cut me to the heart, I 'sure you, sir, to see Master Delamere so dreadfully used—my good missus, that's in bed, says to me—says she"——

"But what had Mr. Titmouse to do with it, you know?" said Mudflint, taking out of his pocket a bit of crumpled paper, at which the man he addressed gazed listlessly, and exclaimed, "*No, it won't do*——He didn't desarve such treatment, poor young gentleman." (Here Bloodsuck and Mudflint whispered—and the latter, with a very bad grace, produced a second bit of crumpled paper.)

"*That's* something like"—said the man, rather more good-humouredly.

"Now, mind, by a quarter past eight—eh?" inquired Mudflint, very anxiously, and somewhat sullenly.

"I'm a man of my word—no one can say I ever broke it in earnest; and as for a straightforward bit o' business like this, I say, I'm your man—so here's my hand."

"Don't *that* look rather like business?" inquired M'Do'em, in a whisper, after they had lightly stepped away.—"But come along!" * * * * *

After another similar scene, the two returned to the Hare and Hounds, and the matter was satisfactorily settled between Crafty and M'Do'em—one hundred down, and the rest on the morning after the election. He was to *poll for Titmouse*, and that, too, early in the day; and be as conspicuous and active as possible in his exertions in behalf of that gentleman—to appear, in short, one of his most stanch and confidential supporters. Whether Lord de la Zouch or his son would have sanctioned such conduct as this, had they had an inkling of it, I leave to the reader to conjecture; but Crafty was easy about the matter—'twas only manœuvring: and all weapons are fair against a burglar or highwayman; all

devices against a swindler. M'Do'em gave Crafty a list of nine voters at Grilston who had received five pounds a-piece; and enabled him to discover a case of wholesale *treating*, brought home to one of the leading members of Mr. Titmouse's committee.

Well, this worthy capped all his honourable services, by hurrying in to Gammon, some quarter of an hour after he had received the second anonymous letter, and with a perfect appearance of consternation, after carefully shutting the door, and eyeing the window, faltered that all was going wrong—traitors were in the camp;—that Lord de la Zouch had *bought every man of the Quaint Club two days before at thirty pounds a-head!* half already paid down, the rest to be paid down on the morning of the *fifteenth day after Parliament had met*—(M'Do'em said he did not know what that meant; but Gammon was more influenced and alarmed by it than any thing else that had happened;)—that *Ben Bran was playing false*, having received a large sum—though how much M'Do'em had not yet learned—as head-money from Lord de la Zouch; and that, if one single farthing were after that moment paid or promised to any single member of the club, either by Mr. Titmouse, or any one on his behalf, they were all delivered, bound hand and foot, into the power of Lord de la Zouch, and at his mercy. That so daring and artful was Lord de la Zouch, that his agents had attempted to tamper with even HIM, M'Do'em! but so as to afford him not the least hold of them. Moreover, he knew a fellow-townsman who would, despite all his promises to the liberal candidate, poll for Delamere: but nothing should induce him—M'Do'em—to disclose the name of that person, on account of the peculiar way in which he—M'Do'em—had come to know the fact. On hearing all this, Gammon calmy made up his mind for the worst; and immediately resolved to close all further negotiation with the Quaint Club. To have acted otherwise would have been mere madness, and courting destruction. The more he reflected on the exorbitant demand of the Quaint Club—and so *suddenly* exorbitant, and enforced by such an insolent sort of quiet pertinacity, the more he saw to corroborate—had that occurred to him as necessary—the alarming intelligence of M'Do'em.

Mr. Gammon concealed much of his emotion; but he ground his teeth together with the effort. Towards six o'clock, there was a room full of the friends and agents of Titmouse; to whom Gammon, despite all that had happened, and which was known to only four or five of those present, gave a highly encouraging account of the day's prospects, but impressed upon them all, with infinite energy, the necessity for caution and activity. A great effort was to be made to head the poll from the first, in order at once to do away with the *prestige* of the show of hands; and the "friends of Mr. Titmouse," (*i. e.* the ten pounds' worth of mob,) were to be in attendance round the polling-booth at seven o'clock, and remain there the rest of the day, in order, by their presence, to encourage and protect (!) the voters of Mr. Titmouse. This and one or two other matters, having been thus arranged, Mr. Gammon, who was completely exhausted with his long labour, retired to a bed-room, and directed that he should without fail be called in one hour's time. As he threw himself on the bed, with his clothes on, and extinguished the candle, he had at least the consolation of reflecting, that nine of the enemy's voters were safely stowed away, (as he imagined,) and that seven or eight of the *accessibles*, pledged to Mr. Delamere, had promised to reconsider the matter.

If Gammon had taken the precaution of packing the front of the polling-booth in the way I have mentioned, Mr. Crafty had not overlooked the necessity of securing efficient protection for his voters; and between seven and eight o'clock no fewer than between four and five hundred stout yeomen, tenants of Lord de la Zouch and others of the surrounding nobility and gentry, made their appearance in the town, and insinuated themselves into the rapidly accumulating crowd; many of them, however, remaining at large, at the command of Mr. Delamere's committee, in order, when necessary, to secure safe access to the poll for those who might require such assistance. It was strongly urged upon Mr. Crafty to bring up a strong body of voters at the commencement, in order to head the polling at the end of the first hour.

"Not the least occasion for it," said Crafty, quietly—"I don't care a straw for it; in a small borough no end can be gained, where the voters are so few in number that

every man's vote is secured long beforehand, to a dead certainty. There's no *prestige* to be gained or supported. No. Bring up *first* all the distant and most uncertain voters—the timid, the feeble, the wavering; secure them early while you have time and opportunity. Again, for the first few hours poll languidly; it *may* render the enemy over easy. You may perhaps make a sham *rush* of about twenty or thirty between twelve and one o'clock, to give them the idea that you are doing your very best. Then fall off, poll a man now and then only, and see what *they* will do, how *they* are playing off their men. If you can hang back till late in the day, then direct, very secretly and cautiously, the bribery oath and the questions to be put to each of their men as they come up; and, while you are thus picking their men off, pour in your own before they are aware of your game, and the hour for closing the poll *may* perhaps arrive while some dozen or so of their men are unpolled. But above all, gentlemen," said Crafty, "every one to his own work only. One thing at a time throughout the day, which is quite long enough for all you have to do. Don't try to bring up several at once; if you have *one* ready, take him up at once and have done with him. Don't give yourselves the least concern about ascertaining the numbers that *have* polled, but only those that have *yet to be* polled: the returns I will look after. Let those stand behind the check-clerks, who are best acquainted with the names, persons, and circumstances of the voters who come up, and can detect imposture of any sort before the vote is recorded *and the mischief done.* The scoundrel may be thus easily *kept off* the poll-books, whom it may cost you a thousand pounds hereafter to attempt to remove, in vain."

The day was bright and frosty; and long before eight o'clock the little town was all alive with music, flags, cheering, and crowds passing to and fro. The polling-booth was exceedingly commodious and well constructed, with a view to the most rapid access and departure of the voters. By eight o'clock there were more than a thousand persons collected before the booth; and, significant evidence of the transient nature of yesterday's excitement, the yellow colours appeared as five to one. Just before eight o'clock up drove Mr. Titmouse in a dog-cart,

from which he jumped out amidst the cheers of almost all present, and skipped on to the bench behind his own check-clerk, with the intention of remaining there all day to acknowledge the votes given for him. But Mr. Delamere, with a just delicacy and pride, avoided making his appearance either at or near the booth, at all events till the voting was over. The first vote given was that of Obadiah Holt, the gigantic landlord of the Hare and Hounds, and for Mr. Delamere, the event being announced by a tremendous groan; but no one ventured any personal incivility to the laughing giant that passed through them. A loud cheer, as well as a sudden bobbing of the head on the part of Titmouse, announced that the second vote had been recorded for him; and, indeed, during the next twenty minutes he polled fifteen for Delamere's eight. At *nine* o'clock the poll stood thus—

Titmouse,	31
Delamere,	18
Majority,	13

Steadily adhering to Mr. Crafty's system, at *ten* o'clock the poll stood—

Titmouse,	53
Delamere,	29
Majority,	24

At *eleven* o'clock—

Titmouse,	89
Delamere,	41
Majority,	48

At *twelve* o'clock—

Titmouse,	94
Delamere,	60
Majority,	34

At *one* o'clock—

Titmouse, - - - - -	129
Delamere, - - - - -	84
Majority, - - - - -	45

At this point they remained stationary for some time; but Delamere had polled all his *worst* votes, Titmouse almost all his *best*. The latter had, indeed, only *seventeen* more in reserve, independently of the Quaint Club, and the still neutral *twenty* accessibles; while Delamere had yet, provided his promises stood firm, and none of his men were hocussed or kidnapped, forty-five good men and true—and some faint hopes, also, of the aforesaid twenty accessibles. For a quarter of an hour, not one man came up for either party; but at length two of Delamere's leading friends came up, with faces full of anxiety, and recorded their votes for Delamere, amidst loud laughter. About half-past one o'clock, a prodigious—and I protest that it was both to Lord de la Zouch and Mr. Delamere a totally unexpected—rush was made on behalf of Delamere, consisting of the *twenty accessibles;* who, in the midst of yelling, and hissing, and violent abuse, voted one after another for Delamere. Whether or not a strong pressure had been resorted to by some zealous and powerful gentlemen in their neighbourhood, but entirely independent of Mr. Delamere, I know not; but the fact was as I have stated. At *two* o'clock the poll stood thus—

Titmouse, - - - - -	145
Delamere, - - - - -	134
Majority, - - - - -	11

Thus Titmouse had then polled within one of his positive reserve, and yet was only eleven above Delamere, who had still fifteen men to come up!

"Where is the Quaint Club?" began to be more and more frequently and earnestly asked among the crowd: but no one could give a satisfactory answer; and more than one conjecture was hazarded, as to the possibility of

their coming up under *blue* colours. But—*where were they?* Watching the state of the poll, and under marching orders for the moment when the enemy should be at his extremity? Between two o'clock and a quarter past, not one vote was polled on either side; and the crowd, wearied with their long labours of hissing, and shouting, looked dispirited, listless, exhausted. By-and-by Mr. Gammon, and Messrs. Bloodsuck, (senior and junior,) Mudflint, Centipede, Ginblossom, Going Gone, and others, made their appearance in the booth, around Titmouse. They all looked sour, and depressed, and fatigued. Their faces were indeed enough to sadden and silence the crowd. Were Mr. Titmouse's forces exhausted?—"Where's the Quaint Club?" roared out a man in the crowd, addressing Mr. Gammon, who smiled *wretchedly* in silence. The reason of his appearing then at the polling-booth was certainly the one first suggested; but he had another; for he had received information that within a short time Dr. Tatham, and also fourteen of the Yatton tenantry, were coming up to the poll.

Mr. Gammon, accordingly, had not stood there more than five minutes, before a sudden hissing and groaning announced the approach of a blue—in fact, it proved to be little Dr. Tatham, who had been prevented from earlier coming up, through attendance on one or two sick parishioners. It cost the quiet stout-hearted old man no little effort, and occasioned him a little discomposure, elbowed, and jolted, and insulted as he was; but at length there he stood before the poll-clerks—who did not require to ask him his name or residence. Gammon gazed at him with folded arms, and a stern and sad countenance. Presently, inclining slightly towards Mudflint, he seemed to whisper in that gentleman's ear; and —"Administer the bribery oath," said he to the returning officer, eagerly.

"Sir!" exclaimed that functionary in a low tone, with amazement—"The bribery oath! To Dr. Tatham? Are you in earnest?"

"Do your duty, sir?" replied Mudflint, in a bitter insulting tone.

"I regret to say, sir, that I am required to administer the bribery oath to you," said the returning officer.

"What? What? The bribery oath? To *me?*" inquired Dr. Tatham, giving a sudden start, and flushing violently: at which stringent evidence of his guilt—

"Ah, ha!" cried those of the crowd nearest to him—"Come, old gentleman! Thou must bolt it now!"

"Is it pretended to be believed," faltered Dr. Tatham, with visible emotion—"that *I am bribed?*" But at that moment his eye happened to light upon the exulting countenance of the "Reverend" Mr. Mudflint. It calmed him. Removing his hat, he took the Testament into his hand, while the crowd ceased hooting for a moment, in order to hear the oath read; and with dignity he endured the indignity. He then recorded his vote for Mr. Delamere; and after fixing a sorrowful and surprised eye on Mr. Gammon, who stood with his hat slouched a good deal over his face, and looking in another direction, withdrew; and as he turned his mild and venerable face towards the crowd, the hissing subsided.

Shortly afterwards came up, amidst great uproar, several of the tenantry of Mr. Titmouse—all of them looking as if they had come up, poor souls! rather to receive punishment for a crime, than to exercise their elective franchise in a free country. Gammon coloured a little, took out his pocket-book and pencil, and fixing on the first of the tenantry, Mark Hackett, the eye as it were of a suddenly-revived serpent, wrote down his name in silence—but what an expression was in his face! Thus he acted towards every one of those unhappy and doomed persons; replacing his pocket-book whence he had taken it, as soon as the last of the little body had polled. It was now a quarter to three o'clock, (the poll closing finally at *four,*) and thus stood the numbers:—

Delamere, - - - - -	149
Titmouse, - - - - -	146
Majority, - - - - -	3

On these figures being exhibited by an eager member of Mr. Delamere's committee, there arose a tremendous uproar among the crowd, and cries of "Tear it down! Tear it down! Ah! Bribery and corruption! Three

groans for Delamere! O—h! o——h! o——h!" Matters seemed, indeed, getting desperate with the crowd; yet they seemed to feel a sort of comfort in gazing at the stern, determined, yet chagrined countenance of the ruling spirit of the day, Mr. Gammon. He was a "deep hand,"—he knew his game; and, depend upon it, he was only waiting till the enemy was clean done, and then he would pour in the Quaint Club, and crush them for ever. Thus thought hundreds in the crowd. Not a vote was offered for a quarter of an hour; and the poll clerks, with their pens behind their ears, employed the interval in munching sandwiches, and drinking sherry out of a black bottle—the crowd cutting many jokes upon them while thus pleasantly engaged. Symptoms were soon visible, in the increasing proportion of blue rosettes in and about the crowd, that this promising state of things was reviving the hopes of Mr. Delamere's party, while it as plainly depressed those in the yellow interest. Not for one moment, during the whole of that close and exciting contest, had Mr. Crafty quitted his little inner apartment, where he had planned the battle, and conducted it to its present point of success.

Nor had his phlegmatic temperament suffered the least excitement or disturbance; cold as ice though his heart might be, his head was ever clear as crystal. Certainly his strategy had been admirable. Vigilant, circumspect, equal to every emergency, he had brought up his forces in perfect order throughout the day; the enemy had not caught the least inkling of his real game. By his incessant, ingenious, and *safe* manœuvring, he had kept that dreaded body, the Quaint Club, in play up to the advanced period of the day—in a state of exquisite embarrassment and irresolution, balancing between hopes and fears; and he had, moreover, rendered a temporary reverse on the field upon which he then fought, of little real importance, by reason of the measures he had taken to cut off the enemy entirely in their very next move. He was now left entirely alone in his little room, standing quietly before the fire with his hands behind him, with real composure, feeling that he had done his duty, and awaiting the issue patiently. The hustings, all this while, exhibited an exciting spectacle. Another quarter of an hour had elapsed

without a single vote being added to the poll. The crowd was very great, and evidently experiencing no little of the agitation and suspense experienced by those within the booth—(except Mr. Titmouse, whose frequent potations of brandy and water during the day, had composed him at length to sleep—as he leaned, absolutely snoring, against the corner of the booth, out of sight of the crowd.) The poll clerks were laughing and talking unconcernedly together. The leading Blues mustered strongly in their part of the booth; elated undoubtedly, but with the feelings of men who have desperately fought their way, inch by inch, sword to sword, bayonet to bayonet, up to a point where they expect, nevertheless, momentarily to be blown into the air. What *could* have become of the Quaint Club? thought *they* also, with silent astonishment and apprehension. Gammon continued standing, motionless and silent, with folded arms—his dark surtout buttoned carelessly at the top, and his hat slouched over his eyes, as if he sought to conceal their restlessness and agitation. Excitement—intense anxiety—physical exhaustion—were visible in his countenance. He seemed indisposed to speak, even in answer to any one who addressed him.

"O cursed Quaint Club! O cursed Crafty! I am beaten—beaten hollow—ridiculously. How the miscreants have bubbled me! Crafty can now do without them, and won't endanger the election by polling them! We are ruined! And what will be said at head-quarters, after what I have led them to believe—bah!"—he almost stamped with the vehemence of his emotions. "There's certainly yet a resource; nay, but that also is too late—*a riot*—a nod, a breath of mine—those fine fellows there—down with hustings—poll-books destroyed. No, no; it is not to be thought of—the time's gone by."

It was now nearly a quarter past three, the poll closing at four. "It's passing strange!" thought Gammon, as he looked at his watch; "what can be in the wind? Not a man of them come up! Perhaps, after all, Lord de la Zouch may not have come up to their mark, and may now be merely standing on the chance of *our* being unable to come to terms with them. But what can I do,

without certain destruction, after what I have heard? It will be simply jumping down into the pit."

A thought struck him; and with forced calmness he slipped away from the polling-booth, and, with an affectation of indifference, made his way to a house where a trusty emissary awaited his orders. 'Twas a Grilston man, a yellow voter, as much at Gammon's beck and call as Ben Bran was represented to be at the command of Lord de la Zouch. Gammon despatched him on this enterprise—to rush alarmedly among the club, who knew him, but not his devotion to Gammon—to tell them that he had just discovered, by mere accident, the frightful danger in which they were placed, owing to Mr. Gammon's being enraged against them on account of their last proposal—that he had now made up his mind to the loss of the election, and also to commence prosecution for bribery against every single member of the club; for that, having early suspected foul play, he was in a position "to *nail* every man of them," without fixing himself on Mr. Titmouse. If he succeeded thus far—viz. in alarming them—then, after apparently dire perplexity, he was suddenly to suggest one mode of at once securing themselves, and foiling their bitter enemy, Gammon; viz. hasten up to the poll without a word to any one, and by placing Titmouse at the top of the poll, *destroy Gammon's motive for commencing his vindictive proceedings*, and so take him in his own trap.

Gammon then returned to the polling-booth, (having named the signal by which he was to be apprised of success,) and resumed his former position, without giving to any one near him the slightest intimation of what he had been doing. If he imagined that any movement of *his*, at so critical a moment, had not been watched, he was grievously mistaken. There were three persons whose sole business it had been, during the whole of that day, to keep a lynx eye upon his every movement, especially as connected with the Quaint Club. But the cunning emissary was equal to the emergency; and having (unseen) reconnoitred the street for a few moments, he imagined he detected one, if not two spies, lurking about. He therefor slipped out of a low back window, got down four or five back yards, and so across a small hidden alley, which

enabled him to slip, unperceivedly, into the back-room of the house he wished.

"Ben! Ben!" he gasped, with an air of consternation.

"Hallo, man! what is't?" quoth Ben.

"Done! every man of you sold! Mr. Gammon turned tail on you. Just happened to hear him swear a solemn oath to Mr. Mudflint, that before four-and-twenty hours" * * *

"Lord!—you, did you really?"

"So help me ——!" exclaimed the man, aghast.

"What's to be done?" quoth Ben, the perspiration bursting out all over his forehead. "We've been made the cursedest fools of by some one. Hang me if I think the old beast at Fotheringham, or the young cub either, has ever meant"——

"What signifies it? It's all too late now."

"Is'nt there *any* way—eh? To be sure, I own I thought we were pitched a *leetle* too high with Mr. Gam"——

"But he has you *now*, though; and you'll find he's a devil incarnate. But stop, I see"—he seemed as if a thought had suddenly glanced across his puzzled and alarmed mind—"I'll tell you how to do him, and save yourselves yet."

"O Lord!—eh?" exclaimed Ben, breathlessly.

"But are they all together?"

"Oh, ay! In five minutes' time we could all be on our way to the booth."

"Then don't lose a minute—or all's lost! Don't explain to them the fix they're in till it's all over—and if *ever* you tell 'em or any one, the bit of service I've——"

"Never, Thomas, so help me ——!" quoth Ben, grasping his companion's hand as in a vice.

"Off all of you to the booth, and poll for life and death, for *Titmouse*."

"What? Come—come, Master Thomas!"

"Ay, ay—you fool! Don't you see? Make him win the election, and then *in course* Gammon's no cause to be at you—he'll have got all he wants."

"My eyes!" exclaimed Ben, as he suddenly perceived the stroke of policy. He snapped his finger, buttoned his

coat, popped out of the house—within a few moments he was in the midst of the club, who were all in a back yard, behind a small tavern which they frequented. "Now lads!" he exclaimed, with a wink of his eye. He took the yellow and blue colours out of his bosom; returned the blue and mounted the yellow: so in a trice did every one present, not one single question having been asked of Ben, in whom they had perfect confidence.

But, to return to Mr. Gammon. It was now a moment or two past the half hour—there was scarcely half an hour more before the election must close. The mob were getting sullen. The Quaint Club were being asked for—now with hisses, then with cheers.

All eyes were on Gammon, who felt that it was so. His face bore witness to the intensity of his emotions; he did not even attempt to disguise his desperate disappointment. His nerves were strung to their highest pitch of tension; and his eyes glanced incessantly, but half-closed, towards a corner house at a little distance: ah! it was suddenly lit up, as it were, with fire—never was such an instantaneous change seen in a man's face before.

He had at length caught the appointed signal; a man appeared at a window, and waved a little stick through it. A mighty sigh escaped from the pent-up bosom of Gammon, and relieved him from a sense of suffocation. His feelings might have been compared to those excited in our great commander, when the Prussians made their appearance at Waterloo. The battle was won; defeat converted into triumph; but suddenly recollecting himself—aware that every muscle of his face was watched—he relapsed into his former gloom.

Presently were heard the approaching sounds of music—nearer and nearer came the clash of cymbals, the clangour of trombone and trumpet, the roll of the drum;—all the crowd turned their faces towards the quarter whence the sounds came, and within a few seconds' time was seen turning the corner, full on its way to the booth, the banner of the Quaint Club, with yellow rosettes streaming from the top of each pole—yellow ribands on every one's breast. THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE HAD TRIUMHED! Their oppressors were prostrate! A wild and deafening shout of triumph burst from the crowd as if they had been

one man; and continued for several minutes intermingling with the inspiriting sounds of the noble air—"Rule Britannia!" played by the two bands, (that of Mr. Titmouse having instantly joined them.) On marched the club, two and two, and arm in arm, with rapid step; their faces flushed with excitement and exultation—their hands vehemently shaken by the shouting crowd, who opened a broad lane for them up to the polling booth. Oh, the contrast exhibited in the faces of those standing *there!* What profound gloom, what vivid vexation, rigid despair, on the one hand—what signs of frantic excitement, joy, and triumph on the other! "Titmouse!" cried the first member of the club, as he gave his vote; "Titmouse!" cried the second; "Titmouse!" cried the third; "Titmouse!" cried the fourth. The battle was won. Mr. Titmouse was in a majority, which went on increasing every minute amidst tremendous cheering.

Mr. Gammon's face and figure would at that moment have afforded a study for a picture; the strongly repressed feeling of triumph yet indicating its swelling influence upon his marked and expressive countenance, where an accurate eye might have detected also the presence of anxiety. Again and again were his hands shaken by those near him. Bloodsuck, Centipede, Mudflint, Going Gone, Ginblossom, as they enthusiastically gave him credit for the transcendent skill he had exhibited, and the glorious result it had secured. As the church clock struck four, the books were closed, the election was declared at an end, with eighteen of Mr. Timouse's voters yet unpolled. Within a few minutes afterwards Mr. Going Gone hasitly chalked up on the board, and held it up exultingly to the crowd—

Titmouse, - - - - -	237
Delamere, - - - - -	149
Majority, - - - - -	88!

"Hurrah!—hurrah!—hip, hip, hip, hurrah!" pealed from the crowd, while hands were upraised and whirled round, hats flung into the air, and every other mark of popular excitement exhibited. "Titmouse!—Titmouse!—Nine times nine for Mr. Titmouse!" was called for, and responded to with thrilling and overpowering effect.

The newly elected member, however, could not be pinched, or shaken, or roused, out of the druken stupor, into which, from the combined influence of liquor and excitement, he had sunk.

To enable him to go through the responsible duties of the day—viz: bobbing his head every now and then to the worthy and independent electors who came to invest him with the proud character of their representative in the House of Commons—he had brought in his pocket a flask of brandy, which had been thrice replenished: in a word, the popular idol was decidedly not presentable; and under the impulse of strong excitement, Mr. Gammon, infinitely to the disgust of the Reverend Smirk Mudflint, who was charged up to the throat with combustible matter, and ready to go off at an instant's notice, stepped forward, and on removing his hat was received with several distinct and long continued rounds of applause. Silence having been at length partially restored—

"Yes, gentlemen," he commenced, in an energetic tone and with an excited and determined air and manner, "well may you utter those shouts of joy, for you have fought a noble fight and won a glorious victory, (*great cheering.*) Your cause, the cause of freedom and good government, is triumphant over all opposition, (*immense cheering.*) The hideous forms of bigotry and tyranny are at this moment lying crushed and writhing, (vehement cheering rendered the rest of the sentence inaudible.) Gentlemen, truth and independence have this day met and overthrown falsehood and slavery, (*cheers,*) in spite of the monstrous weapons with which they came into the field, (*groans*)—bribery, (*groans,*) corruption, (*groans,*) intimidation, (*hisses,*) coercion and treachery, (*mingled groans and hisses.*) But, gentlemen, thank God, all was in vain! (*enthusiastic cheering.*) I will not say that a defeated despot is at this moment sitting with sullen scowl in a neighbouring castle, (*tremendous shouts of applause*;) all his schemes frustrated, all his gold scattered in vain, and trampled under foot by the virtuous electors whom he sought first to corrupt, and then degrade into slaves, (*great cheering.*)

"Gentlemen, let us laugh at his defeat, (*loud and prolonged laughter;*) but let us rejoice like men, like freemen,

that the degraded and execrable *faction* to which he belongs is defeated, (*cheering.*)—Gentlemen, if ever there was a contest in which public spirit and principle triumphed over public and private profligacy, this has been it; and by this time to-morrow, hundreds of constituencies will be told, as their own struggles are approaching, to—*look at Yatton*—to emulate her proud and noble example; and England will soon be enabled to throw off the hateful incubus that has so long oppressed her, (*immense cheering.*) But, gentlemen, you are all exhausted, (*No! no! and vehement cheers;*) we are *all* exhausted, after the great labour and excitement of this glorious day, and need repose, in order that on the morrow we may meet refreshed to enjoy the full measure of our triumph, (*cheering.*) In particular, your distinguished representative, Mr. Titmouse, worn out with the excitement of the day, long depressed by the adverse aspect of the poll, was so overpowered with the sudden and glorious change effected by that band of patriots who——(the rest of the sentence was drowned in cheering.) Gentlemen, he is young, and unaccustomed to such extraordinary and exciting scenes, (*hear, hear, hear!*) but by the morrow he will have recovered sufficiently to present himself before you, (*cheers.*) In his name, gentlemen, I do from my soul thank you for the honour which you have conferred upon him, and assure that he considers any past success with which Providence may have blessed him (*hear, hear, hear!*) as nothing, when compared with the issue of this day's struggle, (*cheering.*) Rely upon it that his conduct in Parliament will not disgrace you, (*no, no, no!*) And now, gentlemen, I must conclude, trusting that with victory will cease animosity, and that there will be an immeidate declaration of those feelings of frank and manly cordiality, and good feeling, which ought to distinguish free fellow-citizens, and, above all, is signally characteristic of Englishmen, (*cheering.*) Shake hands, gentlemen, with a fallen enemy, (*we will, we will!*) and forget, when you have conquered, that you ever fought!"

With these words, uttered with the fervour and eloquence which had indeed distinguished the whole of his brief address, he resumed his hat, amidst "three times three for Mr. Titmouse!"—three times three for Mr.

Gammon !"—" nine times nine groans for Mr. Delamere!" —which were given with great energy. The two bands approached; the procession formed; the nearly insensible Titmouse, his face pale, and hat awry, was partly supported and partly dragged along between Mr. Gammon and Mr. Going Gone; and to the inspiring air of "See the Conquering Hero comes," accompanied by the cheering crowd, they all marched in procession to Mr. Titmouse's committee room. He was hurried up stairs; then led into a bed-room; and there, soon, alas! experienced the overmastering power of sickness, which instantly obliterated all recollection of his triumph, and made him utterly unconscious of the brilliant position to which he had just been elevated—equally to the honour of himself and his constituency, who justly and proudly regarded

"TITTLEBAT TITMOUSE, ESQ. M. P."

as the glorious first-fruits to them of the glorious "*Bill for giving Everybody Everything.*"

At a late hour that night, an interview took place between Ben Bran and Mr. Gammon, of which all that I shall say at present is, that it was equally confidential and satisfactory. There can be no harm, however, in intimating that Mr. Gammon made no allusion to the arrival of the Greek kalends; but he *did* to —— the fifteenth day after the meeting of Parliament. He satisfied Ben—and through him the Quaint Club—that Lord de la Zouch's agents had been only deluding them, and had laid a deep plan for ensnaring the club—which Gammon had early seen through, and endeavoured to defeat.

A little circumstance which happened some two or three days afterwards, seemed to corroborate the truth of at least a portion of his statements—viz: eight prosecutions for bribery were brought against some members of the Quaint Club: and on their hastily assembling to consult upon so startling an incident, one still more so came to light;—five leading members were *not to be found.* Writs in actions for penalties of £500 each, were on the same day served upon—Barnabas Bloodsuck, Smirk Mudflint, (otherwise called *the Reverend* Smirk Mudflint,) Cephas Woodlouse, and—woe is me that I should have it to

record!—"Oily Gammon, gentleman, one of the attorneys of our lord the king, before the king himself, at Westminster." The amount claimed from him was £4000; from Bloodsuck £3000; and from Mudflint £2500, which would, alas, have alone absorbed all the pew rents of the little establishment for one hundred years to come, if system of moral teaching should so long live. What was the consternation of these gentlemen to discover when in their turn they called a private meeting of their leading friends, that one of them also was missing, viz: *Judas M'Do'em!* Moreover, it was palpable that amidst an ominious silence and calmness on the other side—even on the part of *True Blue*—the most guarded and systematic and persevering search for evidence was going on; and with all Gammon's self-possession, the sudden sight of Mr. Crafty stealthily quitting the house of an humble Yellow voter, a week after the election, occasioned him somewhat sickening sensations.

Gammon was not unaccustomed to wade in deep waters; but these were *very* deep! However, a great point had been gained. Mr. Titmouse was M. P. for Yatton; and Mr. Gammon had maintained his credit in high quarters, where he stood pledged as to the result of the election; having been long before assured that every member returned into the new Parliament was worth his weight in gold. Such were the thoughts passing through the acute and powerful mind of Gammon, as he sate late one night alone at Yatton, Mr. Titmouse having retired to his bedroom half stupified with liquor, and anxious to complete matters by smoking himself to sleep.

The wind whistled cheerlessly round the angle of the Hall in which was situated the room where he sate, his feet resting on the fender, his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the fire. Then he took up the newspaper, recently arrived from town, which contained a report of his speech to the electors at the close of the poll; it was the organ of the Whig party—the *Morning Growl;* and its leading articles commented in very encomiastic terms upon his address, "given in another part of the paper." His soul heaved with disgust at the thoughts of his own dissimulation;—"Independence!" "Purity of Election!" "Public Principle!" "*Triumph of Principle!*" "Popular

enthusiasm!" "Man of the people!" *Look*, thought he —eugh—*at Titmouse!* Is *representation* an utter farce —a mere *imaginary* privilege of the people? If not, what but public swindlers are we who procure the return of such idiots as—faugh! Would I had been on the other,"——He rose, sighed, lit his chamber candle, and retired—to bed, but not to rest; for he spent several hours in endeavouring to retrace every step which he had taken in the election—with a view to ascertaining how far it could be proved that he had legally implicated himself. The position in which, indeed, he and those associated with him in the election were placed, was one which required his most anxious consideration, with a view, not merely to the retention of the seat so hardly won, but to the tremendous personal liabilities with which it was sought to fix him.

The inquiries which he instituted into the practices which he had been led to believe prevailed openly upon the other side, led to no satisfactory results. If the enemy had bribed, they had done so with consummate skill and caution. Yet he chose to assume the *air* of one who thought otherwise; and gave directions for writs for penalties to be forthwith served upon Mr. Parkinson, Mr. Gold, Mr. St. Aubyn, and Mr. Milnthorpe—all of whom, as indeed he had expected, only laughed at him. But it was wofully different as regarded himself and his friends: for before Mr. Crafty took his departure from Yatton, he had collected a body of evidence against all of them, of the most fearful stringency and completeness. In fact, Lord de la Zouch had determined that, if it cost him ten thousand pounds more, he would spare no effort, as well to secure the seat for his son, as to punish those who had been guilty of the atrocious practices which had been revealed to him.

Need I say with what intense interest, with what absorbing anxiety, the progress of this contest had been watched by the Aubreys? From Lady de la Zouch and other friends, but more especially from Dr. Tatham, who had regularly forwarded the *True Blue*, and also written frequent and full letters, they had learned, from time to time, all that was going on. Mr. Aubrey had prepared them for the adverse issue of the affair; he had never

looked for any thing else; but could he or any of them feel otherwise than a painful and indignant sympathy with the little Doctor, on reading his account of the gross insult which had been offered to him at the hustings? Kate, before she had read half of it, sprang from her chair, threw down the letter, cried bitterly, then kissed the venerable Doctor's hand-writing, and walked to and fro, flashing lightning from her eyes, as her vivid fancy painted to her with painful distinctness that scene of wanton and brutal outrage, on one of the most gentle, benevolent, and spotless of God's creatures, whose name was associated in all their minds, with every thing that was pious, pure, and good—indeed they were all powerfully affected.

As for *the Reverend* Smirk Mudflint—"Presumptuous wretch!" quoth Kate, as her flashing eye met that of her brother: and he felt that his feelings, like her own, could not be expressed. The first account she received of the outrage perpetrated on Delamere was in the columns of the *True Blue*, which being published that evening, had been instantly forwarded to town by Dr. Tatham. It blanched her cheek; she then felt a mist coming over her eyes—a numbness—a faintness ensued, and she sank upon the sofa, and swooned. It was a long while after she had recovered before a flood of tears relieved her excitement.

'Twas no use disguising matters, even had she felt so disposed, before those who felt so exquisite and vivid a sympathy with her; and who did not restrain their ardent and enthusiastic expressions of admiration at the spirited and noble manner in which Delamere had commenced and carried on his adventure. At whose instance, and to please whom, had it been really undertaken? Kate's heart fluttered intensely at the bare notion of seeing him again in Vivian Street. He would come—she felt—with a sort of *claim* upon her!—And he made his desired and dreadful appearance some days afterwards, quite unexpectedly. Kate was playing on the piano, and had not heard his knock; so that he was actually in the drawing-room before she was aware of his being in London, or had formed the slightest expectation of such a thing.

"Heavens, Mr. Delamere!—Is it you?" she stammered,

rising from the piano, her face having suddenly become pale.

"Ay, sweet Kate—unless I am become some one else, as—*the rejected of Yatton*—he replied fondly, as he grasped her hands fervently in his own, and led her to the sofa.

"Don't—don't—Mr. Delamere"—said she faintly, striving to release one of her hands, which she instantly placed before her eyes to conceal her rising and violent emotion. Her brother and Mrs. Aubrey considerately came to her relief, by engaging Delamere in conversation. He saw their object; and releasing Miss Aubrey for the present, from his attentions, soon had entered into a long and very animated account of all his Yatton doings.

In spite of herself, as it were, Kate drew near the table, and, engrossed with interest, listened, and joined in the conversation, as if it had not been actually DELAMERE who was sitting beside her.—He made very light of the little accident of the wounded lip—but as he went on, Kate looked another way, her eyes obstructed with tears, and her very heart yearning towards him. "Oh, Mr. Delamere!"—she suddenly and vehemently exclaimed—"what *wretches* they were to use you so!"—and then blushed scarlet. Shortly afterwards Mr. Aubrey went down stairs to fetch up one of Doctor Tatham's letters for a particular purpose; and—what will my lady readers say?—I—I—in fact, it is useless mincing matters,—Delamere, who was sitting next to Kate, thought that no time was like the present—she never looked so beautiful—he threw his arms round her, and kissed her white forehead half a dozen times——

"Fie, fie, Mr. Delamere!" said Mrs. Aubrey, slightly colouring, but not with a *very* angry air—"are these the tricks you have learned at Yatton?"

"Pray, Mr. Delamere—I beg—I entreat of you—*don't*"—quoth Kate, striving vehemently to detach his arms from her waist, which she barely succeeded in doing before her brother re-entered the room. The faces of all three of them burned like fire—and if Aubrey suspected any thing, he *said* nothing, but was soon engaged with the letter he had gone in quest of.

"Well—see if I'm not M. P. for Yatton, yet," said De-

lamere, with a confident air, just before he rose to go—"and that within a few weeks, too; and *then*"——

"Don't be too sure of *that*," said Aubrey gravely.

"Sure? I've no more doubt of it," replied Delamere briskly, "than I have of our now being in Vivian Street—if there be the slightest pretence to fairness in a committee of the House of Commons. Why, upon my honour, we've got no fewer than eleven distinct, unequivocal"—

"If election committees are to be framed of such people as appear to have been returned."

END OF VOL. IV.

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